



# 당신과나의 어사일럼

◡ ◡ 오만과 편견 ◡ ◡

— IV —

류세린 지음 · SALT 일러스트













Your And My Asylum (당신과 나의 어사일럼) - Volume 04 - Pride and Prejudice by Ryu Saerin (류세린).

Published by Novel Engine (영상출판미디어) in 2016.

Illustrations by SALT

Translated by [Shalvation](#)

Edited by Rando & itachuu

eBook & typesetting & redrawing by [Olivki](#)

Scans by Seraphin

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.



It was for your sake.

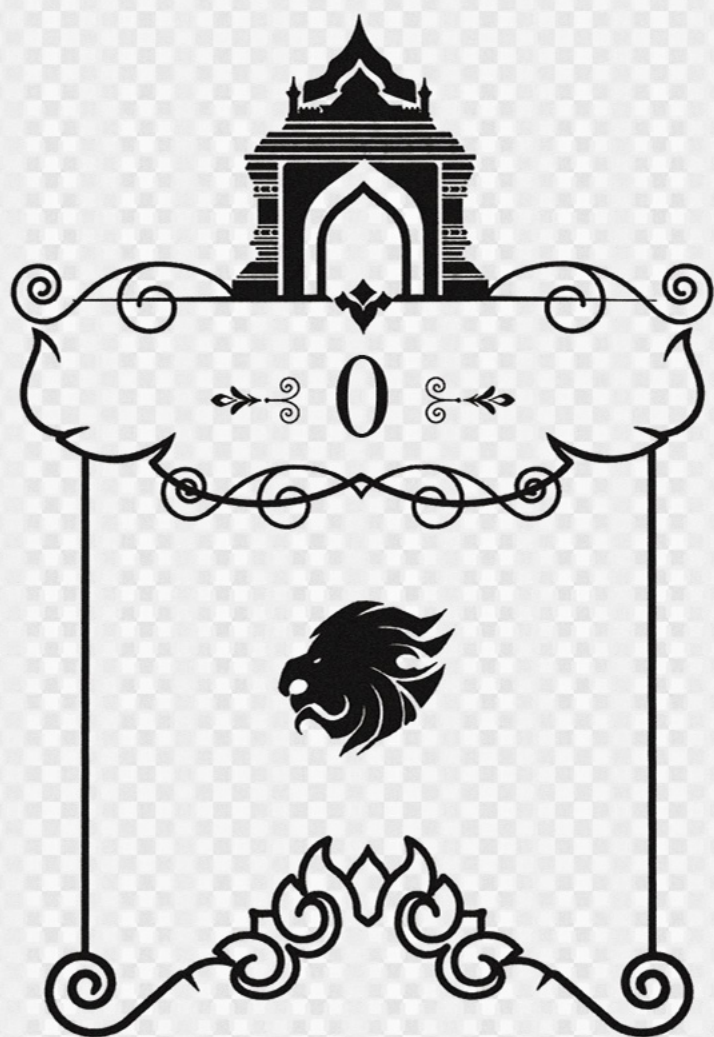
It is for your sake.

It is most likely for your sake.

It is fine if the day where you acknowledge  
this fact does not come.

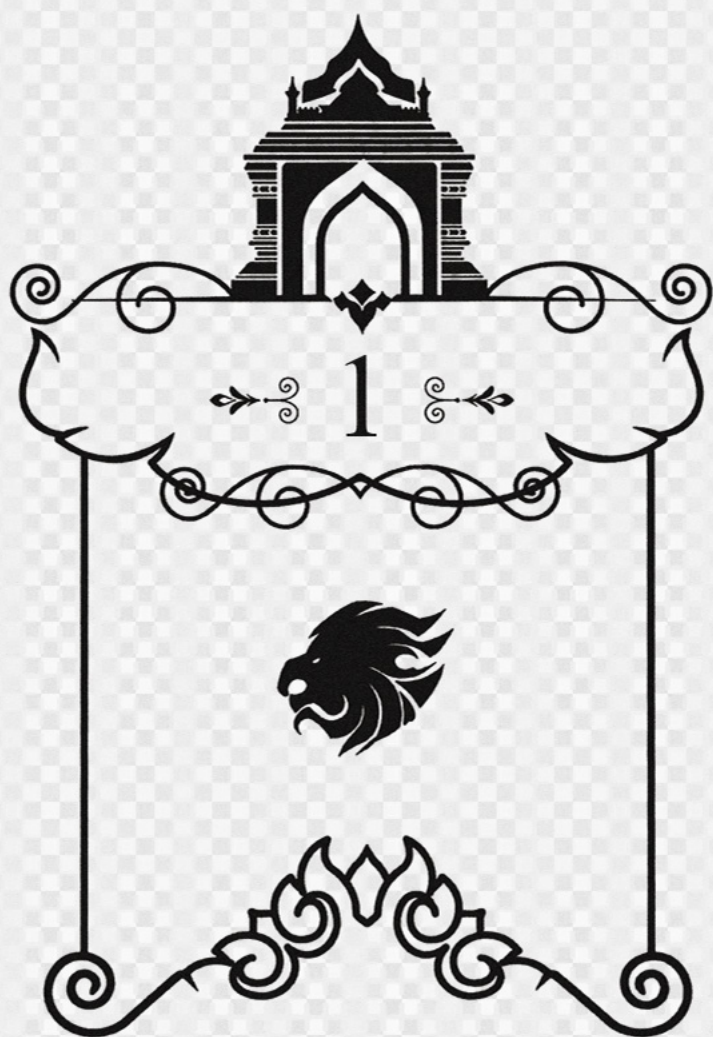
My sacrifice did not require something like  
your understanding since the very beginning.

And fear arrived.





*Did you not see it?*  
*Are you not aware of it?*  
*Did you not see that person deceive them?*  
*Did you not see that person scheming?*  
*How can you trust that sort of person?*  
*Can you believe them?*





I organized the current situation.

First, Sophna was pressing her staff against my throat.

Second, the reason behind this was because she had suspected that I would be harmful to the Earl.

Finally, Sophna had asked the spy who she had assigned to me, Ariya, for the verdict.

Ariya spoke.

**“No.”**

She then continued her explanation.

**“Yujin…… he is not harmful to Her Excellency the Earl. If anything, Yujin is acting for the sake of Her Excellency the Earl.”**

The glowing light that was wrapped around Ariya’s body remained white. This response must have been outside of her expectations as Sophna then narrowed her eyes.

**“During your previous report, did you not say that there were many things about him that were suspicious? For example, the incident that had occurred on top of the castle wall.”**

**“That was a misunderstanding.”**

Ariya responded flatly. The glowing light was still white.

Sophna closed one eye and appeared as if she were in deep thought. The pressure coming from her staff was dissipating as well. A long silence. Eventually, the glowing light wrapped around Ariya's body dispersed like a bunch of snow pellets.

Sophna withdrew her staff and took a single step back. Eyes that resembled a quiet and still field looked down at me.

“I will be watching you.”

The head vassal of the Earl's estate spoke with a voice that sounded like branches that were trembling due to the winter wind.

“Since this much time has passed, this most likely cannot be seen as simply Mii's whim. For it to be possible to still have hope despite the terrible experience she had gone through. Although I am delighted by this fact, I am not pleased about that learning capability. As the teacher of that dull-witted student, I intend to watch over you instead. Thoroughly and stoically. Thus, if I become certain that you will be harmful to Mii, this castle, and this city……!”

I held back my urge to cough. I didn't rub my neck either.

I spoke while ignoring the pain that was still going through my neck.

“Do as you wish.”

Sophna turned her head and laughed. Coldly.

It was at that moment.

**“Miss Sophna…….”**

Sii, who had approached us without me noticing, was now standing between me and Sophna. Even though she was incredibly scared and trembling with fear right now, Sii shook her head with a resolute



expression on her face. The sneer on Sophna's face, which resembled a poisonous plant, withered away.

The half-sister of the lord of the city and the head vassal stared at each other like that for a moment.

The first person to turn their head away was Sophna.

“I will be watching.”

Those were her last words. Similar to how she had appeared, her departure was abrupt as well.



It seems the strength in Sii's legs must have left her the instant Sophna departed as she promptly started to stagger. She then hastily grabbed my neck.

“Yujin, are you okay!? Does your neck not hurt!?”

“It hurts more right now. I feel like it might break so I would be grateful if you released me.”

“Ah, sorry. I'm not being sane right now either. ....And Yujin is ill-mannered! Mhm~~! I was worried about you but that's your response!”

Sii relaxed her grip as she complained. I glanced at Sii and expressed my gratitude to her before I turned to face Ariya.

**“As I thought, you came to us because Sophna had sent**

**you.”**

**“.....I apologize.”**

Ariya lowered her head at a 30 degrees angle. Sii erupted.

**“You traitor! For you to have come to us just so you could spy on Yujin who had saved your life! Despite that, what do you mean by ‘I’m here to repay my debt’!?”**

Ariya’s head went down further and was now at a 67.5 degrees angle. I grabbed Sii’s shoulder.

**“You did well.”**

**“.....Are you saying that, to me, Fair Grace?”**

**“You were able to give Sophna a good evasive answer just now. I’m alive thanks to you.”**

Ariya was unable to raise her head. Although she had no other choice but to answer like that since she was in the same boat as us and Alshi’s life was also on the line, even if that were disclosed, there was most likely nothing else that could be gained other than a contemptible satisfaction.

Instead, I recalled the glowing light that had been wrapped around Ariya’s body. Furthermore, I also recalled the words that Roroa had spoken when we were discussing mind magic.

**“That light, was that like some sort of lie detecting spell?”**

**“To be exact, it’s a spell that detects when someone is feeling agitated or perturbed.”**

As much as that was the case, that meant that the spell wouldn’t be able to pick out the lies as long as one’s answers contained a certain degree of truth to them. Certainly, the answer that Ariya had given contained a reasonable amount of truth. In the end, ‘rehabilitating’

means that we're trying to make the Earl a better person. 'It wasn't a lie' is an obvious cliché, but that sort of obvious answer worked on this sort of obvious spell.

Looking at it the other way around, this means that Sophna is also aware that her spell can be breached with this sort of method. It was most likely because of this reason that she had declared that she was going to be watching me and refused to put away her suspicion.

However, if she really intended to just watch over me, then she should have pretended to have believed in the result of her spell. No, before that, she shouldn't have entered this room and made her presence known in the first place. Sophna Radgrinkle, the Head Vassal of the House of the Lion Earl was a more lax individual than I had expected.

But.

Although it would be easy to come to this conclusion.

Instead of doing so.

**“Can you tell me about what sort of person Sophna is?”**

Ariya nodded while her gaze was still lowered.



A long time ago, the foundation where this city is currently located was in a state where there was an abundant number of fissures spread throughout it. Occasionally, those crevices would increase in number, grow wider, become deeper, and spew lava. Naturally, non-



wicked beings were incapable of living in this sort of region, and as time continued to pass, mineral resources continued to pile up in the ground and the area around it.

Once a water dragon had settled down on this volatile ground, its Dragon Force created a Dragon Cage which then finally calmed down the rampaging earth.

An official pioneering order was given. It was a decree which stated that whoever slew the dragon would, without question, be given a noble status and be allowed to rule over that very land. A new palatinate. A new earl. Tempted by these two rewards, both the unlicensed pioneers and adventurers who were in the vicinity of the region made their way towards this land. After carrying out their assault for a long period of time, they eventually succeeded in breaching the Dragon Cage and creating an encampment above the dragon's nest.

There was one person that was particularly prominent. It was a woman. She had blonde, blinding hair which was disheveled and resembled a lion's mane, and due to her aptitude for both martial arts and magic, she was an individual who had received the title of 'Golden Lion' during her childhood. Although she was an unparalleled womanizer and a boundlessly cruel hooligan, in contrast, she was a person who evoked a charm that attracted people.

The Golden Lion had 7 retainers. While one of them was a warrior, they were also a competent blacksmith, and as another was a mage, they were also a competent seamstress. Another retainer was a mage and also a competent educator, and there was also a retainer who was a warrior and a competent jurist as well. Another one was a rogue and a competent pharmacist while another was a warrior and a competent merchant. The final retainer, as expected, was a competent gardener as a mage.

Mikatni, Naricpitor, Shyobel, Orgit, Edentras, Cepabil, and Radgrinkle.

As these individuals were the Golden Lion's hands and feet, once the Golden Lion had beheaded the water dragon and obtained control over the palatinate, they became the 7 households that acted as pillars to support her.

A lot of things occurred as the years went by. Both Mikatni and Naricpitor's families safely became the community leaders of the city. Shyobel's household collapsed after 50 years which then resulted in its amalgamation with Naricpitor's family, and recently, Orgit's household had also ended up in a similar state. Edentras' household fell into ruin early on. Cepabil, who used to be the illegitimate child of the House of the Cat Earl, returned to her original house after she was accepted as an official daughter due to the recognition she had received. And Radgrinkle became a vassal that aided the earl's family.

Among those, Sophna was a part of the Radgrinkle bloodline. To be more precise, she was the same exact Radgrinkle as the one who was the Golden Lion's retainer. Through 'ascension', she had succeeded in throwing aside the boundary of her own lifespan.

Even after her lord and close friends had all passed away, she continued to live. In order to look after her lord's family and protect them, she became the head vassal and also doubled as the leader of the Royal Guard. According to the state of the city, she would also double as the captain of the guards and, in order to personally educate the bloodline of the House of the Lion Earl, she would also carry out the role of an exclusive tutor. Since Sophna herself was a mage, she was also the exclusive mage of the earl's family. The only important role which she did not handle while taking care of the House of the Lion Earl was the role of a nanny. Ariya Orgit stated that if Sophna were capable of producing breast milk, then she would have taken that role as well.

**“That’s a tremendous story.”**

That was my response.

**“Her and Yudia being the same age make sense now. I also**

**understand how she's able to carry out so many roles despite shutting herself in her room."**

**"Mm. To be more exact, she started to shut herself in her room after Her Excellency the Earl was kidnapped. Before then, she would come up regularly."**

I felt as if I had heard about this tidbit before from the recordings I had gathered through my hidden cameras. 'Ever since she shut herself in', were the exact words. In other words, this meant that there were maids who could recall the time when Sophna didn't shut herself in her room.

There were all sorts of thoughts scattered throughout my head, but regardless of all this, there was only a single conclusion.

**"It seems that I'm not going to be able to avoid a conflict with her."**

Sii turned to look at me hesitantly.

**"With Miss Sophna?"**

**"Yes. A long-standing vassal with conservative tendencies is the most dangerous threat to me in my current state."**

The amount of trust, experience, and authority she had accumulated as she served the earl's family for over a century were most likely on a level that was incomparable to the small amount I had. The fact that she could call the Earl by her name proved this fact. Even her strength, there was no way that the spells she had displayed until now were all that she could do when she was one of the mages that took part in slaying a dragon.

**"Nevertheless, this can also be seen as an opportunity. For starters, the timing isn't bad. While Sophna was shutting herself in her room, I was able to extend my reach over the guards and raise the Earl's good impression towards me by a considerable amount. Moreover, if I'm able to do something**



**about just her, then that means I'll be able to completely establish my position here in this castle."**

**"How will you do it?"**

Ariya asked with a worried look on her face. I adjusted my glasses.

**"No matter who you're dealing with, there are always 4 different approaches. Make a deal with them, obey them, win them over, or get rid of them."**

**"Getting rid of her doesn't seem like an option for us right now."**

**"The difficulty would be too high. Obeying her isn't an option for us either. We'll have to put an emphasis on making a deal with her or winning her over. If we wish to accomplish either one of these, then we'll have to get rid of our own weaknesses while we're investigating hers. The most urgent matter is the former. We currently have the weakness known as the reality of the assault incident after all."**

Additionally, this was an incredibly critical weakness. I asked a question to Ariya who was still lowering her head.

**"Tell me everything you had reported to Sophna until now."**

**"Yeah! Don't leave out even a single detail and spill it all out!"**

Sii panted. Ariya did so with her head still bowed.

The observation started at the beginning of this month. She would report to Sophna anything significant that would happen while watching me from a distance. The reports were usually given through the basket, but there was another method as well. Ariya told me that she would talk about this method more after her explanation. Sii displayed a displeased face, but she soon concentrated on the rest of

Ariya's story.

Although the observation continued, there was a limit to what could be achieved while maintaining a distance. Sophna must have also realized this as she had then decided to stick Ariya closer to me. Sophna had ordered Ariya to make up any reason she could in order to live together with me. She knew that I would become wary if Ariya were to approach me saying that it was on her orders.

If you consider just the result, this was the very move that Sophna had checkmated herself with.

Ariya was sent on an errand and met Zia at the arena. She then requested if she could be assigned as my exclusive maid. Through her observations, she was aware of the fact that I was on good terms with Zia, so if she wished to approach me, whose status was that of a squire, she believed that it would be more natural if she were to do so while under Zia's orders.

At that point, Ariya was sincerely just investigating me. The reason behind this was because she believed that it was Sophna who had done something behind-the-scenes in order to narrowly rescue her, who had committed theft, from death. However, when she had gone to meet Zia in order to make up a reason to live together with me, and when she had brought up Sophna's name, Zia surmised the situation and spoke the words that, to Sophna, were absolutely needless.

**“It was then that I found out that it was Fair Grace who had saved me.”**

From that point on, things proceeded in a more complex manner. Even though she was in a state of panic after hearing about the details, Ariya witnessed me being assaulted by the mask-wearing maids the instant she came to our room after receiving Zia's approval. She immediately leaped in and rescued us. Afterward, she was able to start living with me just as she had wanted, however, she was unable to observe me properly as she did before and she couldn't give proper

reports either.

**“I couldn’t make things disadvantageous for the person who had saved my life. Furthermore, since Alshi was mixed in with the attackers, I obviously couldn’t give a proper report about that either.”**

After saying that, Ariya soon corrected herself.

**“.....No, those are just excuses. I was simply confused. I didn’t know what I should do. That’s why I kept giving vague reports under the excuse that I would postpone the issue until I came to a conclusion.”**

As I expected, if you purely consider the results, then this was what ended up becoming good luck for us. The hidden cameras and the times when Sii and I would occasionally display suspicious behaviors were not reported to Sophna. If these things were reported, then it wouldn’t have ended with simple browbeating.

**“Isn’t that a relief, Yujin?”**

Sii spoke as she shivered slightly. I nodded and turned back to Ariya.

**“Tell me about the ‘other report method’.”**

Ariya took out a rod that was emitting a gray glow and presented it to me.

**“It’s called a Truth Evoker(Trebet’ wez, 情棍).”**

There was a silver gem embedded on one end of the rod.

**“In easy to understand terms, this rod was permanently enchanted with a spell that’s similar to what Miss Sophna had used on me earlier. When the portion of the rod with the gem embedded in it is held, the rod has properties that make it shift in color and temperature according to the wielder’s**



**mood. No matter how many times you break the rod apart, once a person wields it, the change spreads equally throughout every piece of the rod that was a part of the main body when it was initially enchanted.”**

Therefore, if a crisis were to occur, then the wielder’s shift in mood would also be transmitted to any other section of the rod that may be in the possession of another person. So during the incident when Alshi had been stabbed, Sophna most likely appeared quickly because of this item.

**“Can I try holding it?”**

Ariya willingly handed the Truth Evoker over to me. The rod was emanating a soft gray glow, but the rod started to shine radiantly the instant it entered my hand.

Ariya looked surprised.

**“Fair Grace, are you perhaps excited right now?”**

**“No.”**

**“Is that so? But this is definitely the color of excitement…….”**

**“I’m not excited.”**

I passed the Truth Evoker over to Sii. The rod became red-hot once it was in her hands. The heat of a crater that could make the sole of a shoe melt, it was the color of lava that would avidly lick at the ankles of its victims.

Even in reality, the inside of the room was becoming hot and humid. It was influencing the actual temperature as well. The burning scent I felt like I could smell when Alshi had been stabbed and the fact that Ariya’s body was strangely hotter than usual at that time wasn’t just my imagination and was most likely caused by this Truth Evoker.

I took the Truth Evoker back from Sii and returned it to Ariya. The rod which had become hot to the point that it could singe my skin quickly cooled down and turned white once it entered my hands before it then settled back into a dull gray color the instant it returned to Ariya's hands.

**“The only thing that's transmitted through this is the wielder's mood, right?”**

**“Yes. That is the case.”**

**“This and that truth detecting spell are on the same level of the lie detectors in my world. Continue to keep it with you. Let's say that you never showed this to us and that you're still acting as a spy.”**

**“Does Fair Grace think that Miss Sophna will continue to trust me?”**

I recalled Sophna's behavior.

**“Not really. Wouldn't Sophna have noticed that you've been won over by me? She'll probably figure out that you're continuing to act as a spy but under my orders. Regardless, I'm just a kid. And I must really be a kid in Sophna's eyes. She'll most likely see me as a kid who's scheming something obvious. It'd be great if she lowered her guard like that, but it's fine if she doesn't. The important thing is that we're increasing the number of cards we can use.”**

Ariya nodded her head and I continued.

**“Wrapping up the issues. Receive an apology from the Earl and rehabilitate her. While we're trying to establish enough influence to accomplish this, we'll also perform a meritorious deed. Until then, we can't let our plans be revealed. In order to do so, we have to either make a deal with Sophna or win her over. For that same reason, the most important thing right now is to explain everything to Alshi and receive an**

**assurance from her. In order to do that, when Alshi wakes up, we have to be at her side before Sophna.”**

Fortunately, we were able to accomplish that last part with ease. That’s because there was nothing weird about Alshi’s lover, Ariya, being by her side. There was also nothing weird about the Vice-captain of the guards, Roroa, being there as well. Furthermore, there was nothing weird about me and Sii, the ones who had first discovered Alshi while she was in her critical state, being called by Roroa.

Once we got to the room after being led by Roroa, we had arrived shortly after Ariya had finished roughly explaining the situation to Alshi. Ariya was lowering her head as if she were ashamed. Alshi was also doing the same thing, but she soon raised her head first and patted Ariya’s head.

**“You really, are an idiot. ……Although I’m the same as well.”**

Ariya made a tearful face as she let herself be comforted by Alshi’s hand on her head. That was also at a disheveled 16.7 degrees angle. Like so, the communion of the lovers occupied the room for a moment. Respectable people would end up closing their mouths, and it was a time where it would be appropriate to do so.

**“Seriously. If you had talked properly when I called you out before, then things wouldn’t have ended up like this.”**

It was Sii Garno Mikatni who had spoken during this time and in this space.

**“That’s right, that’s right, wan. I said so before, but the two of you need to talk to each other more.”**

Roroa wasn’t a pushover either. Moreover, compared to Sii, Roroa’s aggro rate was higher. Ariya gnashed her teeth and, similarly, Alshi made a stern face.

**“For the person who had used me a bunch, harassed Ariya, and stabbed me with a knife, you talk well.”**

**“Wan? Did something like that happen, wan? Did we not agree that ‘that never happened, and never happened to begin with’? I feel like if we didn’t, then we all, you two included, would be in a very unfortunate situation, isn’t that so, wan?”**

**“You, really…….”**

**“Wan! I’ll be in your care.”**

Roroa spoke in a fresh tone. Ariya and Alshi both glared at her.

Sii was also making a face.

**“You’re really rolling your tongue well in a situation like this. Shouldn’t you be the person to show the most self-restraint right now?”**

Instead of saying that she was giving a hand to what Sii had said first, Roroa made a serious face.

**“Wan. Miss Sii, let me give you a good piece of advice, wan. Self-restraint is something you do when someone stronger than you is upset, wan. It’s not something to be worried about when the weak are whispering among themselves, wan.”**

**“Are you calling us weak?”**

**“Are you not, wan?”**

Ariya stood up angrily. I could clearly see the veins on the back of her hand where her bones were protruding. Alshi grabbed onto that hand.

**“Ariya, stop.”**



I felt this before, but as I expected, this girl was the mature one.

**“I’ll do it.”**

Never mind.

**“Stop.”**

In the end, I had to speak up.

**“Miss Sii, the same goes for your first comment and your comment just now, but there’s no need for you to say those sorts of words with that timing. Roroa, you as well, why are you chipping in and provoking them as well? It’s not like you to do something that isn’t beneficial to you at all.”**

**“Wan. Don’t the two of them know about my circumstances now, wan? Isn’t it fine if I freely reveal my true self? I’ve been putting on an innocent air for so long that it should be okay for me to relieve some stress, right, wan? Also, I don’t like couples, wan.”**

**“Well, that’s like you. The last point doesn’t matter. In any case, stop it. This is an order.”**

Roroa flapped her ears. I turned back to face Alshi and Ariya.

**“I won’t tell you two to forget about everything that had been done to you. Even if I did, I doubt you two would. You were arrested, you were nearly killed, and your lover was almost murdered. You’ve experienced all sorts of bad things. I understand.”**

This was the truth. They must have felt my sincerity as the breathing of the two martial artist type maids settled down.

I continued.

**“Regardless of all that, we’re in the same boat now. If you**

**try to push a single person off of the boat, then we'll end up submerging together. This is probably the last thing the two of you want."**

Ariya dropped her head.

**"You're right, Fair Grace. But, I."**

**"I know. I said I understand, so."**

I stood behind Roroa, put my hands under her armpits, and lifted her up. Roroa started to flail her limbs in panic.

**"Wan!? What are you doing, wan!?"**

**"Let's adjust the scale."**

Alshi tilted her head.

**"What, do you mean?"**

**"First, any damage that cannot be undone is prohibited. Second, public defamation is prohibited. Third, harming people related to her, for example, someone like Kina, is prohibited. The reason for the first and second restrictions is because, in the end, the two of you did not die and the things you had undergone and committed have not been revealed outside. The final restriction is because I'm hoping that the two of you will be better than her."**

However, if you exclude these three things, I continued.

**"You two can do whatever you want to her until your indignations are gone."**

Ariya and Alshi glanced at each other before approaching me.

**"Can we really do anything we want?"**

**"You're saying that, sincerely, right?"**

**“As long as you do it in front of me.”**

Lynching only in a controlled environment. This was a rule that I had established ever since the 8 Years' War.

Roroo shouted in panic.

**“D-Do you think I'll let this happen peacefully, wan!?”**

**“You have to.”**

I adjusted my glasses with the crown of Roroo's head and whispered into her drooping ears.

**“It's an order.”**

**“Wan.....! I.....!”**

I handed Roroo over to Ariya and Alshi. Roroo was lifted up by Ariya and her voice was muffled as Alshi proceeded to cover her mouth.

I couldn't resolve this issue by consoling them half-heartedly. This task of 'stabilizing the psychological balance' was important. This wasn't like Ariya and Sii where they simply didn't get along. If I don't handle this properly, if I'm unable to sublimate the grudges that they're harboring, then this will definitely turn out badly. Although I could resolve things no matter how many times they happened during the 8 Years' War, allowing that to happen now in this current situation means that everyone here will have to lose their lives after some heated torturing.

If you think of it like that, then you can consider the predicament that's currently happening to Roroo as vaccination shots.

Mm.

**“You remember that any damage that cannot be undone is prohibited, right?”**

**“Yes, Fair Grace. We know.”**

**“There’s nothing, to worry about. We know where every single pressure point is, on a Saber-Fang’s body.**

**“Wan! Waan……! Kahak……!”**

**“Wait a second, wasn’t that an internal organ just now……?”**

**“It didn’t burst.”**

Well, it most likely didn’t burst since she said it didn’t, and it really mustn’t have burst since Alshi is also nodding her head, but this scene feels needlessly brutal because of their difference in height.

“I guess I should prepare some medicine.”

Sii responded to the words I had mumbled inadvertently to myself.

“Yujin, you’re really kind.”

No.

That’s the last thing you should be saying…….



Alshi proved her words. Although Roroa, who was literally beaten like a dog, had bruises all over her body and her face would contort every time she took a single step, in any case, there were no severe injuries. Sii was in awe.

**“What an impressive technique.”**

**“Wan…… why are you getting moved by something like that?”**

Roroa growled. Her voice sounded as if she were still suffering from the lingering pain, but it seems she wasn't disheartened. She looked at Ariya and Alshi with sharp eyes. I grabbed her head and turned her towards me.

**“Look at me with that sort of gaze. I'm the one who made them do it.”**

Roroa hesitated for a moment before doing so. I received her gaze properly.

It was a short moment of silence before she then turned her head away.

I patted her head before raising my head to face Ariya and Alshi.

**“Are you satisfied?”**

**“We're somewhat satisfied. We still can't forgive her, though.”**

**“I won't ask for the impossible. There's no problem with working together, right?”**

**“For now, yes.”**

**“Then it's fine.”**

I spoke in a simple tone, but I knew that in actuality, these sorts of things didn't proceed that easily. They'll need more time and motivation. Regardless, I was at least able to put out an urgent fire.

**“Let's do our best from now on.”**

Although I had put out a really urgent fire.



**“Wan……. Then I’ll be in your care from now on, the two of you both, wan.”**

Roroa spoke while smiling coldly.

**“We’re the ones.”**

**“That’ll be in, your care.”**

Both Ariya and Alshi responded with cold smiles on their faces as well.

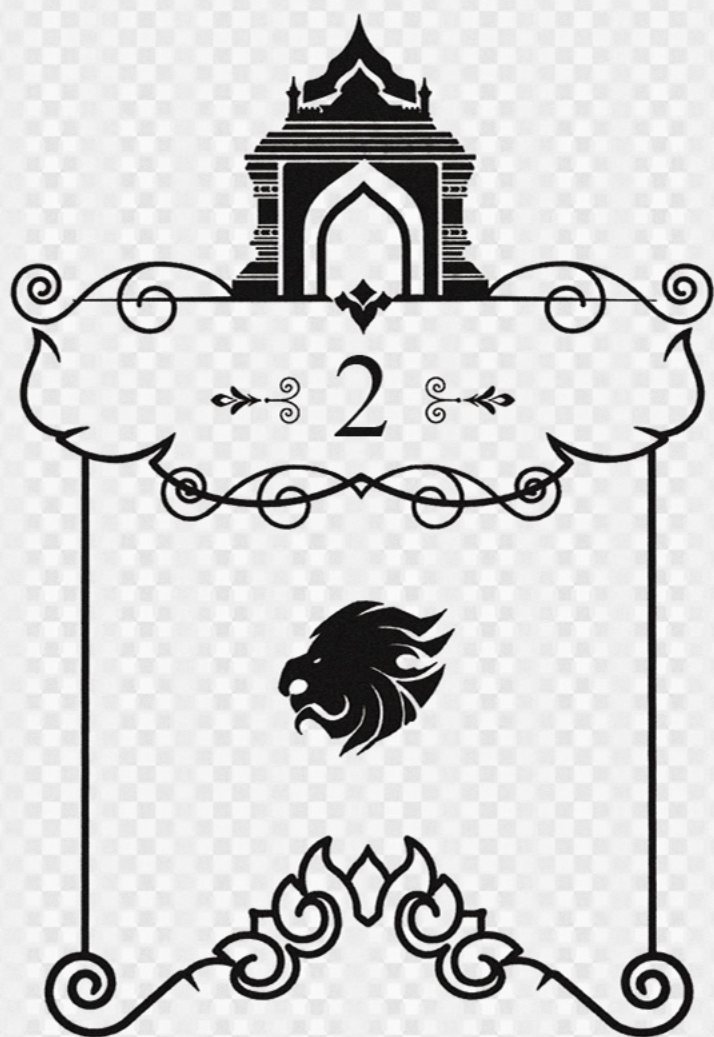
“Mm~~……. Yujin, did it perhaps feel like this when dealing with me and Ariya?”

Sii, who was stuck in the middle, was wrapping her arms around her shoulders while in the crevice of cold gazes.

Mm.

“For the time being, things will be more difficult than before.”

I simply answered her like that.



I had lived a life where I had received quite the amount of love. This is not a distorted truth.

Every weekend, my aunt would take me to church. She did this because she was afraid that my father's sins had been passed on to me.

My father was a person whose likes and dislikes were clearly divided. For starters, his sense of enlightenment. He couldn't stand to see someone committing a logical fallacy. You could probably make an assumption about his personality if you consider the fact that he would go as far as to criticize my aunt for quoting her made-up God during family reunions and he would do so while in the presence of all of our relatives. Additionally, since he would only open his mouth if he was certain that he could win with his needlessly firm logic, as far as I know, he has never lost a debate before. If he had been born in Ancient Greece, then a school of thought from my father would have been passed down to this very day.

However, if he had stayed as just an 'educated intellectual', then his likes and dislikes wouldn't have been so divided. My father was obviously an intelligent person, and he wore glasses as well, however, he had another attribute outside of those things.

My father was an otaku. As he was an otaku who wouldn't type a single line of text without an emoticon, he was also an otaku who established a certain character from a game called <Higurashi When They Cry> as his persona simply because they had similar names. Imagine being refuted by an otaku who goes around wearing character t-shirts. Wouldn't the murderous intent that comes from that be within normal standards? I'm digressing, but you can seriously tell how much of an unredeemable otaku my father was if you consider the fact that even my name was sacrificed to that

ridiculous play on words. There's a reason why I have a deep connection with that subculture.

In any case, she was right. My father's sins were passed down on to me, so it was possible that the teachings of the Lord, Our Father, who had pardoned the sins of his children, could work as a miracle treatment and rid me of my sins.

Of course, this was an analysis that was only possible for me now that I had some leisure and could speak half-jokingly. There's no way that the me during that time could possibly think like this.

I resisted. That resistance only furthered my aunt's belief that my father's sins had been passed down on to me. My aunt cried as she prayed. Our Father, who art in heaven. Forgive this lamb. Please forgive this child. Please watch over this lost lamb. This child doesn't know what he's saying right now. After she finished her prayers like that, the following repertoire would come after. Child, Yujin. You poor lamb. Why do you think I'm doing this? Why do you think I'm acting like this with you alone? All of this is for your sake. You too will understand one day. One day, when you have fulfilled your life and are standing in front of the Gates of Heaven, that person's disciple will recognize you. This prayer is for the sake of helping you get into Heaven. This is for your sake.

It's for you.



**“I understand. I’ll give a testimony that follows, your scenario.”**

That was Alshi's response after we had finished telling her about everything.

**“Hm, you're rather submissive, wan.”**

Although Roroa made a sarcastic remark and Ariya was getting choked up, Alshi was, as expected, more mature than Ariya. As she had regained a certain amount of composure compared to earlier, Alshi turned to face me and Sii instead of responding to that taunt.

**“I have to protect Ariya as well. We're already in, the same boat after all.”**

She had an accurate awareness of reality. I felt relieved since it seemed I didn't have to continue my explanation.

However, Alshi wasn't finished.

**“Regardless, more important than all that, I have a debt to, you and Sii.”**

Alshi bowed her head courteously.

**“I'm sorry for assaulting you both, in the infirmary.”**

This was a bit——unexpected.

I intended to just put that incident behind us, but I didn't think that she would mention it herself. Moreover, she even included Sii and gave a proper apology.

Should I say 'It's okay'? 'Don't worry about it'?

No.

Let's do this right.

**“What do you think, Miss Sii?”**

I wasn't the only person she had wronged, and I wasn't the only

person she was apologizing to either. Therefore, I couldn't make a decision by myself. I could tell from the eyes of the panicking Sii that she had realized this as well.

**“Hmph. Two fingers are probably enough to pick stuff up. The fact that you have more than two fingers means that they have more uses than just picking stuff up. If you really want to apologize, then show some more sincerity!”**

Ariya bit her lips as she continued to watch. She didn't show any reactions beyond this.

Alshi bowed her head further. Her wavy, black hair flowed down and emitted a magnolia-like scent. Sii, who was folding her arms with a haughty expression on her face because of her newfound superiority, became slightly taken aback.

She soon ended up becoming even more startled. It was because Alshi had slowly descended from the bed while lowering herself.

While on her hands and feet.

She was crawling forward.

Alshi, who had arrived in front of the frozen Sii, lowered her head and——pressed her lips against the toe of Sii's shoe.

**“Alshi……!”**

Ariya let out a boiling voice. Instead of turning back to look at her, Alshi proceeded to talk while her head was lowered and her lips were pressed against Sii's shoe.

**“I'm sorry, Sii. Forgive, me.”**

A husky voice resonated along with the scent of magnolias.

Sii was frozen in place. She most likely never expected for something like this to happen. She was letting out a panicked 'uh



———’ sound and was turning to look at me with eyes that were pleading for help.

I didn’t say anything. I simply pointed at my own head briefly. ‘Think’. Sii seemed to have understood my body gesture. Think about it yourself.

Time flowed by for a moment before Sii Garno Mikatni spoke.

**“Do this to Yujin as well!”**

Alshi bowed her head. Her injury must have still hurt, but she crawled towards me anyway and kissed the tip of my shoe despite letting out a painful groan. Silence followed after.

Sii turned to look at me.

**“Yujin. your thoughts?”**

I adjusted my glasses.

**“I think it would be fine to forgive her.”**

**“All right.”** Sii nodded. **“I’ll forgive you, Alshi.”**

Alshi finally got up once Sii had pardoned her. She walked off undauntedly and sat back down next to Ariya. Ariya, who was nearly in tears, leaned her head against her lover’s touch.

I mentally nodded.

First, Ariya. Her reaction of only biting her lips when Sii had told Alshi to show some more sincerity was splendid. Although her most splendid response was mentioning how she had helped and attempting to mediate between Sii and Alshi, compared to when she had displayed her urgent side, I had to grade the self-restraint she displayed just now highly. The cry she let out at the end probably couldn’t be helped, so I’ll ignore that.

Next, Alshi’s reaction was great as well. The fact that she stayed

calm even though I didn't give her an immediate response, and instead, handed the decision making reigns over to Sii. The fact that she didn't lose her temper even though Sii got caught up in the mood and ended up speaking unreservedly. The fact that she had gone a step further and made Sii panic instead. The fact that she had done all of this while staying faithful to her own apology. The fact that she had consoled her lover in order to prevent her lover from harboring any grudges. Everything she did was perfect.

And finally, Sii.

Let's not mind the fact that she had just gone with the flow. It's Sii after all. Regardless, she was able to hastily compose herself after Alshi's unexpected actions, and instead of going even more with the flow, Sii managed to show some self-restraint. She did so because she didn't want to be resented by Ariya. She had sent Alshi to me because of this reason as well. By making her also do the same thing to me, she split the burden. Lastly, by forgiving Alshi after clearly reaching a mutual agreement with me, she was able to take the initiative. For a short while, Ariya will probably feel small while before Sii.

Good. If it's these members, then the range of our ideas will also broaden by that much. If you consider the fact that this was while Roroa, who was the brightest among them, was not taking part in this, there was more to look forward to.

Roroa Ara Harte, who had been watching in an amused manner, raised a corner of her mouth.

**“Wan, thank you for the show. So, what do you intend to do from now on, wan?”**

**“For starters, there's something I want to ask you, Roroa. What exactly were those corpses? You weren't the one who had killed them, right?”**

**“Corpses? Oh, do you mean the Gongshik corpses, wan? Why do you think that I wasn't the one who had killed them?”**

**“Above all else, you don’t have the ability to do something like that, and if you had borrowed the ability of someone else, then there’s no way that the whole story wouldn’t have been leaked. Since Borg only said that those two fellows abruptly disappeared after entering the city, this proves you didn’t hire someone.”**

Roroa nodded her face with an expression that was half-disappointed and half in awe.

**“As expected, you’re sharp. Wan. As I had said before, I only discovered the corpses, wan. Everything after that was as written in the report, wan.”**

**“You have no idea who had killed them and what their murderer’s motives are?”**

**“At first, I thought it was the people from the Black Dragon Street, wan. But if the people from the Black Dragon Street had done it, then it’s impossible for Borg to not know about it, wan. Even if he’s just a branch manager.”**

This wasn’t good. This meant that a power unknown to both the guards that are in charge of the security of the city and the Black Dragon Street that manages all of the illegal activities was moving around. Was it the Mage Tower? Was it the Fedchants? Or did a completely unrelated person kill them for their own personal reason? Why were people from Gongshik here in this city in the first place? All sorts of questions came to my mind. Fortunately, I had an immediate answer for the last one.

**“They were here to have a secret rendezvous with you, weren’t they?”**

**“What makes you say that?”**

**“There are no coincidences.”**

It didn’t make sense that of all people, it was this fellow who had

discovered the corpses of the Gongshik members at such an opportune moment. Roroa let out a sigh.

**“You’re re~ally sharp, wan. You’re right. The Orange Hawk Prince had hired the two of them, wan. They were supposed to meet up with me. Wan. But when I arrived at our secret rendezvous point at the promised time…….”**

**“There was only a pair of fallen corpses and you had no idea who the culprit was.”**

**“Wan, that’s right.”**

Roroa responded while flapping her ears. Sii appeared to be shocked.

**“What do you mean ‘that’s right’? You’re really rotten. How are you able to casually reveal the fact that you’ve been secretly communicating with people outside of the city and scheming potentially harmful things while right underneath the lord’s nose?”**

**“Wan, I never knew that your loyalty to Her Excellency the Earl was so outstanding, Miss Sii.”**

Sii sprung to her feet. I grabbed her shoulder.

**“Miss Sii, I understand that this is a provocation that’s worth getting upset about, but still. For my sake.”**

**“……Mm~~ Fine. I can’t get mixed into this as well. It’ll make things harder for Yujin.”**

Despite saying that, it seems calming down her anger wasn’t an easy task as Sii situated herself on top of my lap. I held her from behind and rested my cheek on her hair. A fragrance and heat that felt like milk had spilled inside of an oven and dried. I spoke.

**“What were you planning to do by meeting them?”**

**“I was going to hear them out first before I decided to do anything, wan. But because things had ended up like this……. I did give a report to the Orange Hawk Prince about it, but all he said in response was ‘is that so?’, so……. I was unable to hear any explanations, wan.”**

Sii's expression appeared to be asking why Roroa didn't try to pry for more information. However, I could tell from Roroa's tone and expression that she had already come to the conclusion that prying further would have been meaningless. A relationship where Roroa would carry out whatever the Orange Hawk Prince ordered her to do. It was a one-way relationship where the other side couldn't give their opinion or ask any questions.

If that was the case, then there was one thing I had to confirm right now.

**“Tell me about this Orange Hawk Prince.”**

Roroa made a complicated face.

**“He's the third prince of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches, wan. He isn't an heir to the throne, but he has the authority to hand out semi-statuses such as knight or ladyship, wan. If you consider the fact that the majority of the princes like to shut themselves inside of the Twelve Earthly Branches' palace, wan, he enjoys wandering around so much that he's seen as eccentric. Wan. He'll be visiting this city soon in order to watch the performance in the arena, wan.”**

**“I already know about those things. I'm talking about his nature.”**

**“He's a scary individual, wan.”**

The dog-eared girl with the heart of a snake declared.

**“Not only is his position one of the highest, but his looks are**

**impressive as well, wan. Furthermore, he's also bright enough to utilize both of these aspects in just the right places, wan. If it's just these three traits, then Yujin, at the very least you might be able to awkwardly imitate them, wan. You're already expertly using your position as the Earl's lover after all. However, that person has something which you don't have, something which you aren't capable of having, wan. Do you know what that is, wan?"**

I thought about it. Now that she mentions it, this was something which I had already felt.

**"It's probably his ability to make decisions and his power to execute them."**

I continued my explanation.

**"Regardless of the basis for the reason why I'm more cautious than necessary, if you consider the fact that he goes around flaunting his position, the fact that he had gone as far as to propose to the Silver Lion Earl, and the fact that he had offended the Earl by giving you a status, he's the type of person who ignores every obstacle in his path once he's made a decision, right?"**

**"As I expected, you might be able to win in terms of cleverness. Wan. Additionally, he's still a prince so even if he behaves however he wants, there's barely anyone out there who's capable of restraining him, wan. Even Her Excellency the Earl would have some trouble doing something if he were to make an unreasonable demand, wan."**

If you wrap it up like this, then he just sounds like some childish noble who doesn't know how scary the world is, but there's no way that Roroa would be putting him on top of a such a pedestal if that were the case. It must be exactly as Roroa had said. The Orange Hawk Prince was most likely handsome, bright, and cunning.

I had to make preparations for him since he was going to be



visiting soon.

However, that was a task for later. For the time being, it was enough to just be aware of his existence.

**“I have to face Sophna before that guy arrives.”**

**“Do you have a plan in mind, wan? We’ve covered our biggest weakness, but…….”**

**“Is Sophna strong? Let’s pretend that everyone here ambushed her all at once. Could we win?”**

**“What an abrupt and drastic hypothetical. It would be impossible for us to come out victorious, wan.”**

**“It’s best to cover the drastic ideas first. Are our chances absolutely zero?”**

Roroa nodded her head. Alshi was the one who explained why.

**“Miss Sophna is an, Ascended Being. The fact that she’s strong, is obvious. Even if we were to kill her, she can resurrect at least, two times. She’ll become stronger after each resurrection as well.”**

I’m the one who was transported to another world, but only the stringent people had cheat-like abilities.

**“All right. Facing her in battle is impossible, then. Excluding that, is there anything else that could be even remotely referred to as her weakness?”**

**“In the end, it’s Her Excellency the Earl. Wan. That grandma would do anything for Her Excellency the Earl. She’s all that grandma has left, after all, wan.”**

Despite that, she had shut herself in her room after the Earl was kidnapped.

**“She shut herself in her room because the Earl got kidnapped, right?”**

**“That’s right, wan. Miss Sophna was also a member of the Mage Tower. Wan. It seems she did whatever she could in order to stop it, but what’s inevitable is inevitable.”**

Roroa answered while shrugging her shoulders. Despite the fact that she was talking as if this was someone else’s business, there was some bitterness in her voice. This fellow was most likely also present in this castle when the Earl had been kidnapped. As a member of the guard.

I wonder how she felt during that incident.

How did everyone feel when the Silver Lion Earl, when the esteemed daughter of the earl at that time, was kidnapped?

I turned on my iPad and organized the information of everything we had talked about until now. Ariya’s timeline. Roroa’s timeline. Gongshik. Orange Hawk Prince. Sophna again. I didn’t have a stratagem to handle her yet. I still didn’t have enough puzzle pieces.

Sii puffed out her cheeks.

**“All right~~! Let’s think about this complicated stuff later. You can’t think of anything right now anyway, right? We shouldn’t try to rush things.”**

Those words were similar to what she had said to me back when we had resolved ourselves to retaliate against the Silver Lion Earl. Alshi turned her head.

**“Sii, you’ve been speaking, well lately.”**

**“D-Do you have a problem with that?”**

**“Not really.”** Alshi turned her gaze away. **“It’s nice.”**

Sii twitched.

Right when her face was beginning to gradually become red-hot, Ariya added another blow.

**“I think so as well.”**

Sii lowered her face. Her mouth was wriggling like a worm that had been tossed under the scorching sun. I reached my hand out and patted her head. Until the day she got used to the treatment which she rightfully deserved. I then spoke.

**“Now then, like Sii had suggested, let’s put aside the problems we can’t solve yet.”**

Ariya smiled bitterly.

**“Agreed. Alshi, are you hungry?”**

**“My stomach hurts, more than it feels hungry. Because of a certain someone.”**

Ariya and Alshi’s line of sight both went towards that certain someone. Roroa snapped back at them.

**“Wan. My body also hurts because of a certain two people, wan!”**

**“Do you want to be in even more pain?”**

**“Weren’t we even now!?”**

**“Fair Grace never said anything like that.”**

**“Yujin, wan! Yujin! Double jeopardy! I heard that the concept of double jeopardy exists in your world as well, wan!”**

I lowered Sii from my lap and stood up.

**“Let’s go eat. Alshi, Roroo, I’ll make you two some nutritious porridge.”**



A few days later.

Although a fairly massive incident had occurred, nothing on the surface changed. It was too soon to use the pretext of assisting the investigation as an excuse to not do maid work. The total amount of work everyone had to do was slowly starting to increase as we had to make preparations in order to receive the guests that were going to arrive in the near future. If anything, I had to work even harder now in order to block any of the complaints that could go to Sii since she was still only capable of handling simple tasks.

Sii was also aware that I had no other choice but to split apart my sleeping schedule in order to work. One day, when I woke up at dawn and was about to leave, she spoke to me.

“Yujin! Don’t overwork!”

“It’s okay. I endured a schedule much harder than this back when I was attending school.”

“Still, you’re working too much! My arm doesn’t hurt as much anymore, so me as well. Yeah, if I work a little more…….”

“I’ll be mad.”

I responded a bit firmly. Sii appeared as if she wanted to protest, but she dropped her head once she saw my face.

Ariya, who was about to leave with me, spoke up.

**“What you need to focus on is making sure your arm gets better.”**

**“Uuu…… I’ll try to get better quickly.”**

**“There’s no need for it to be done ‘quickly’. Just do it with ‘certainty’.”**

After Sii nodded her head, Ariya and I left to work.

While working like that, several changes had occurred. Several of these changes were what I had been aiming for.

**“Once I’m discharged from here, I want to live together, with you all.”**

Alshi had said this while still laying on top of the bed in the infirmary. This was an obvious sequence and something which Ariya had been looking forward to.

**“That’s okay, right? Yujin. I already passed that ‘interview’ at that time after all.”**

Alshi asked while folding her arms. I nodded my head without any hesitation.

**“Of course I’d welcome you. You would as well, right, Miss Sii?”**

**“……Just don’t do anything weird with Ariya.”**

Sii uttered with a displeased face.

Ariya flinched but Alshi covered her mouth with her hand and smiled.

**“What, do you mean by weird?”**

**“You know! Like embracing each other, rubbing against each other, or k-kissing. ....You’re both girls! It’s really unsightly.”**

**“Did you not like it when I kissed your shoe?”**

Alshi purposely opened her eyes wide and asked back. Sii winced.

**“Eck..... uh..... I didn’t dislike it, but t-t-that was an apologetic kiss.....”**

**“If I do it for a reason besides apologizing, then would you, refuse?”**

In response to Alshi’s words which she had said while lowering her back to the point that her hair was flowing down and tilting her head up to look up at Sii, Sii froze in place. It seems that reaction was entertaining for her as Alshi’s smile thickened.

**“What if I were to remove your shoe and do it, on the top of your foot? Would you still refuse?”**

**“Uh.....”**

**“Alshi! What are you saying!?”**

Ariya uttered while gnashing her teeth. I also put my foot down.

**“Teasing each other is fine, but I would like it if you were more prudent. Despite Miss Sii’s appearance, she’s a genuine sadist. If you go past the point of panic, then she’ll probably make you actually do it. Every last corner at that.”**

**“W-What do you mean by a genuine sadist!?”**

I meant it literally.

Alshi whistled as if her fun had just been spoiled.

**“Hmm. So you’re saying that she isn’t just all talk?**

**Regardless, isn't it somewhat amusing?"**

**"Are you talking about Sii's reaction or Ariya's reaction when she sees you do things like that?"**

Alshi answered by simply smiling while sticking out her tongue. This was followed by calming down Ariya who was nearly in tears and stomping on the ground. Was this what people referred to as the populace?

**"I'm a lacking and twisted person like this, but I'll be, in your care."**

Ariya's lover said while prettily raising the corners of her skirt.

Normally, one would have to get Sophna's approval in order to move rooms. You could say that this was something I was reluctant to do since Sophna had marked me. That's why I decided to take the path of directly appealing to the Earl while giving her my regular report. The Earl immediately gave her approval.

She did scold me lightly.

"Seriously, you're a lecher, Mr. Yujin. Did you want to rub against a bunch of girls in a small room that much? Two of them are even a couple, aren't they? This is the first time I heard that you had a thing for netori<sup>[1]</sup>, Mr. Yujin. Heugugugu, or is it perhaps that? Do you believe that the two of them are a couple because they don't know the touch of a man? The two lesbians who once glared at Mr. Yujin with resolute faces, in the next moment, with completely messed up faces ----."

It wasn't lightly.

"She's also a victim of an assault so I thought that the investigation would be smoother if we used the same room." I gave an excuse like that for now. "More importantly, the room really is small now that you mention it. Can you not move us to a bigger room?"



The Silver Lion Earl's expression became serious.

“Hm. This is also a type of pillow talk. In principle, I'm not allowed to give you a new room, but I'm also sorry for not being able to give you your salary, Mr. Yujin. I'm also sorry for not being able to give you your own personal room. All right. There should be an empty room on the third floor of the central tower.”

“I'm grateful.”

“Ah ha, you should be.”

Like that, we moved. Alshi was going to join us once she's been discharged.

The rooms on the third floor of the central tower were originally created to receive honored guests. It was an absurdly wide and good place for a single squire and several maids to live in. This had also made the other maids jealous, but we were able to resolve this issue by holding a snack party which doubled as a housewarming party. The fact that Kina, who used to constantly pick fights with me, had become polite must have also helped.

I should first talk about when the Vice-captain of the guards, Ryungste, had stepped down from his position.

**“I don't have the right to raise my head before Her Excellency the Earl……. I'm at least grateful that she isn't going to punish this old man. I guess I'll spend my time fishing and watch my granddaughter grow up. It feels like I'm handing everything off even though it's a busy period, so I'm sorry.”**

He had already been reprimanded once, so the fact that he wasn't present when Alshi was assaulted became the finishing blow. It appears that some people were worried that the Silver Lion Earl was going to put Ryungste on a torture rack, but I trusted the Silver Lion Earl in that regard. This wasn't like the time when she was dealing with me, who was a being from another world, or her half-sister, Sii.

She wasn't the type of person to torture an old vassal who had been working for her since a long time ago for a reason like that.

Thus, Ryungste departed. Roroa was promoted to vice-captain. In actuality, this was similar to having become the new owner of the guards. This was enough to make her little sister, Kina, happy.

Albeit, she wouldn't be this happy if she knew about the details.

I frequently met up with that new owner of the guards. Although I gave the excuse that it was in order to cooperate with the investigation, the real reason was to watch over her and make sure that she didn't get any funny ideas. Thankfully, Roroa wasn't an idiot, and since it seems like she had no desire of being killed by the Earl like a dog, nothing of concern had occurred.

If anything, I was able to enjoy these meetings. It wasn't only because Roroa had fluffy ears. As expected, it was because Roroa wasn't an idiot. She was well-informed and, as she had proved before, she had an outstanding information gathering and analyzing ability. Only a few days had passed, but I had already obtained substantially more information than what I had gathered until now.

**“That was everything that had occurred today in the Water Dragon City, wan.”**

**“So there were more incidents today compared to yesterday.”**

**“There will be even more tomorrow, wan. Including the 271 visitors today, the total population of non-residents staying in the city has reached nearly 7,000 today, wan. If things go according to the yearly average, then the numbers will reach 10,000 around the middle of next month, wan.”**

**“You guards are going to have it rough, huh.”**

**“Wan, yup. That's why, in truth, I don't have the time to be idling around here like this, wan. There are some people**

**who've been complaining that, despite just being a dog, I've been spending my time leisurely after I became the vice-captain, wan."**

**"I recall seeing people who were like that the last time I visited the guard station."**

**"There are things in the world that won't disappear no matter how hard you try, wan."**

**"Yeah, that's unfortunate."**

**"It's most unfortunate for them, wan."**

Roroo flapped her ears as she laughed. For them to have clumsily made this girl into their enemy, they really were unfortunate. I predicted that Roroo will have completely conquered the entire guard station within the next few days.

And that was exactly what happened. A few days later, Roroo was making a blissfully satisfied expression when I met her again.

**"Did things turn out well?"**

**"Very much so. It would be even better if this meeting also disappeared, wan. I'm behind on my work as well."**

**"Sorry, but this is a necessary meeting. Please take care of your piled up work by working overtime."**

**"My precious resting time is disappearing, wan....."**

**"Service and sincerity is the best type of rest.' Rixco Chidorea."**

**"Did you know that, in the end, that person was stabbed to death in an alleyway, wan? They say that there were so many people who had stabbed him, that there were more than twelve different types of knives pierced into his body, wan."**

Roroa even knew about the fellow known as Rixco Chidorea whom no one knew about other than the Earl. What a smart girl.

**“Waan! That tickles, wan!”**

And her ears were fluffy.

However, even she didn't know everything.

**“That's why even I don't know what happened to Ahyeon or what had occurred back then, wan. I said so before, but at that time, I was at the very end of the stick, wan.”**

It was something I was already told before. I thought that she might have been hiding something, so I tried to question her about this from all sorts of different angles, but seeing how consistent her answers were every time, she must really not know. She shot my question back to me.

**“If anything, I want to ask you about it, wan. Besides me, have you asked anyone else about this, wan? For example, Her Excellency the Earl or Miss Zia. Aren't you close to the two of them?”**

**“I felt like asking the Earl would be too risky. I asked Zia several times before, but she wouldn't tell me. ‘You don't need to know about it.’ this is what she would say before going silent.”**

To be exact, her response was a bit different. ‘You mustn't know about it’. I did try to pry further for a reason, but Zia refused to answer. After that, since the incident related to Sii had occurred and Zia had been spending her time with her teacher at the arena, I had no opportunity to ask her again.

Roroa seemed to be contemplating something as she had folded her ears down. Shortly after,

**“Wan. Well, it should be fine to proceed with the**

**investigation slowly. I've met you. ....And I'm also the vice-captain of the guards now, wan."**

she quietly muttered this.

Time flowed by once more.

Since Roroa and I were also people, we were bound to become weary if we talked about things only related to work all the time. Efficiency wasn't something that could be expected when weary, so every time this happened, we would either mess around or share a light conversation. Among the topics of our small talk, we would talk about the legends of this world.

**"In this world, the only nation to have survived to this very day among the many nations established by humanity, ah, the humanity here refers to the alliance of intelligent species with humans at the center, in any case, the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches was the only nation to have subsisted, wan."**

**"There's only one nation?"**

**"Wan, yup. Who knows though, wan? There might be some in the Rosin' pa(Translating..... Land of fog? Faded territory? Assuming it to be 'unexplored region')."**

**"You guys didn't explore everything yet? When the Silver Lion Earl mentioned the Alchemy Fortress, she said that they had 'vaccines for almost every pathogen in the world'."**

**"Things that occur in a place that cannot be seen is the same as having never occurred at all, wan. The Alchemy Fortress has no reason to care about any of the diseases that circulates outside the boundary of humanity, wan. They won't make any profit, wan."**

**"I guess you're right, the Earl also mentioned that they were the ones who set the price for medicine."**

**“Yup, the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches pioneers the path and it’s the duty of the Alchemy Fortress and the other eleven factions to steadily lay the foundation down on that pioneered land, wan. If you look at it from that point of view, then you could say that this Lion Palatinate is still in a gray area. Putting aside the fact that a majority of the twelve major factions don’t have a branch here, wan, this city is located west of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches and, although the other palatinates are the same, it’s acting as a wedge that’s positioned in the center of an undeveloped land, wan.”**

**“Undeveloped land, unlicensed settlement, and unexplored region. These places keep being mentioned as if they’re special, but why’s that?”**

**“Wan. Of course, that’s because monsters live there.”**

**“Are the monsters…… strong?”**

Roroo blinked a couple of times.

**“What?”**

**“Wan, nothing. I just remembered something that happened in the past. Mm, rather than strong, they’re evil existences, wan.”**

After saying that with an expression that appeared as if she were reminiscing the distant past, she flapped her ears once I made a confused face.

**“Humankind has that thing they can understand each other with, right, wan? Even if their history and culture are different, there’s still that one thing they can empathize with. For example, be it good or bad people, they acknowledge the general concept of good and bad, right, wan? However, those concepts in themselves don’t work on the majority of the monsters that live in undeveloped lands, those inhumane**

**creatures, wan. It's not like they aren't intelligent. You can hold conversations with them if you learn their language, but the fact that they're still unable to understand despite this makes them give off this sense of difference, wan."**

It might be because I was living in a world where meaningful contact with another sapient race has never been recorded, but I couldn't understand that statement. Why aren't they able to comprehend the concept even though a dialogue could be established? The Silver Lion Earl may be a being from another world and also a psychopath, but we were able to understand each other by talking, and even though Roroa was also a being from another world, a different race, and a sociopath, we understood each other by talking as well. Wouldn't this in itself already be enough to prove that Ludwig Wittgenstein was wrong?

Was it simply discrimination? Protecting their territory? In the past, Westerners were referred to as Semu or Red-haired ghosts in China and were treated as monsters. Westerners had also treated the Native Americans as trash, claiming that they had crossbred with demons and beasts. The harmful consequences of ignorance were larger than the harmful consequences that came from weapons.

Roroa tilted her head at my assumption.

**"People are already handling that sort of discrimination well, wan. Even now, people call me dog or dagger-teeth, wan. Humans and monsters are different in a truly intrinsic sense. Wan. Just that alone is already a problem, but there's also another issue."**

**"What is it?"**

**"The fact that if you reside within these monsters' territory for too long, then even humans can be contaminated and this will make them start behaving bizarrely, wan. Do you remember the unlicensed pioneer village I talked about a while back, wan?"**



**“Monster, elderly, womb?”**

**“Yes, that. There are many occasions where the majority of the people who live in remote locations have those sorts of eccentric customs or traditions. Unlicensed pioneer villages are the prime examples, wan. The Cat Palatinate that is located on the very border of the kingdom’s domain is somewhat similar in that sense, wan.”**

Although I felt as if it was like that because universal discrimination had combined with a small society, since there would be no end if I were to argue like that, I decided to type down our entire conversation onto my iPad. Roroa flapped her ears.

**“Wan. That’s handy. I want one, wan.”**

I adjusted my glasses.

**“Personally, I envy that sacred blessing ability of yours.”**

**“Wan! It is indeed a good ability. All Saber-Fangs know how to use it, wan. Albeit, there aren’t that many who know how to use it properly, wan. That doesn’t change the fact that I still want wan.”**

**“Wait. I’ll get you one when I go back to Korea.”**

**“I’ll be looking forward to it, wan. Oh right, speaking of Korea, I did what you asked me to do before.”**

As she said that, Roroa handed my iPhone to me. It was the iPhone I had handed to her several days ago. I had made her go and take pictures of the places I couldn’t enter, the places I weren’t allowed to enter, and the places that I couldn’t let myself be spotted in.

I immediately opened the gallery. I skimmed through the images for a moment before my eyes stopped on a single image.

Silence.

Roroo carefully opened her mouth.

**“Wan. What will you do about it? Should I bring it to you, wan?”**

**“No.”**

I shook my head.

**“Leave it be.”**

**“Aren’t you being too cautious, wan? Her Excellency the Earl has been leaving it alone, but…….”**

I calculated with my empty hand while copying the images and sending them to my iPad. If I ask a favor of Sei when I go this time and receive it the next time I go, then I’ll be able to do something about the subject of this photo on the trip after that. The process of breaching the lock will be needed, so approaching the contents of it will have to be done on the trip after that……. In this regard, it’s true that this is going to take a long time.

**“I can’t take the risk.”**

Roroo let out a whine. I gave an explanation.

**“The Earl might not care about it, but there’s another person watching me, isn’t there?”**

**“Do you mean Miss Sophna?”**

**“At the very least, let’s not do stuff that can cause trouble.”**

Although in reality, even though she had said ‘I will be watching’, she never appeared after that. In that regard, Roroo said this.

**“It’s because of the central water source, wan.”**

Following that line, Roroo utilized her sacred blessing and went on to give this complex explanation, but in summary——.

**“She’s blocking the volcanic activity underground?”**

**“Wan, that’s right. Every year, it becomes active during this time. She goes to the central water source and uses the water power there in order to lessen the pressure, wan.”**

Since she had to use the water during this process, that was the reason why the flow of water during this period of the year would become weak. However, there was something else that was on my mind.

**“What happens if she’s unable to block the volcanic activity?”**

**“What do you mean, wan? It’ll obviously erupt.”**

I felt taken aback.

**“Do you not feel anxious by the fact that there are over 20,000 people living in a city that could explode if a single person were to mess up?”**

**“Aren’t societies all like that, wan? Ahyeon said that your people live like that in your world as well, wan.”**

It was a wise answer to a silly question.

Situations, where people would simply look on while there’s a construction that could fall apart if a certain person didn’t do their best were common. Something like making two people manage the boiler room of a building on a rotation. If a large incident occurs, then people would make snobbish remarks like ‘it was a fated calamity’. Even modern Earth, with its developed civilization and mature society, was like that as well. To the people who didn’t receive the bomb, regardless of who the bomb went to, it was always nothing more than someone else’s business.

I went into deep thought. Roroa must have misunderstood my silence as she elaborated on her explanation.

**“Normal people don’t know about this in the first place, wan. Moreover, people who do know about it don’t care. Miss Sophna is a splendid mage.”**

There was a sense of trust in those words. If this snake with dog ears was capable of saying this, then that meant Sophna was undoubtedly an amazing mage.

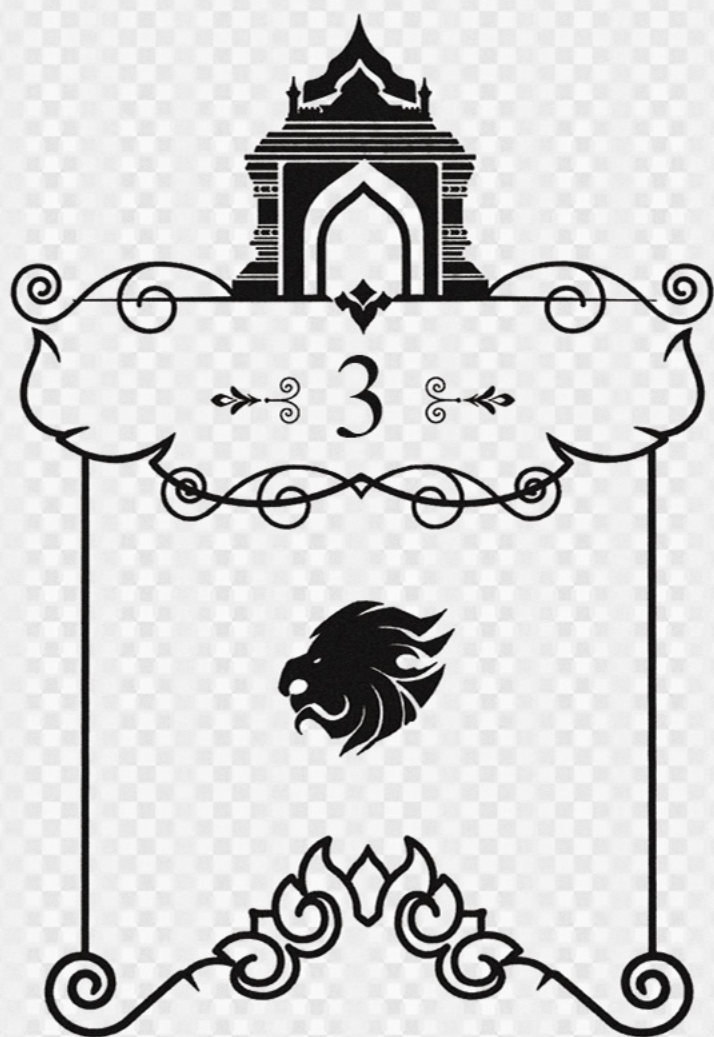
The issue was that that amazing mage was being hostile towards me. She’s busy with restraining the volcano right now, but once she’s finished, she’ll probably come up to the castle. In that regard, Roroa offered this prediction.

**“The thing is, she’s been staying down there longer than usual, and continuously at that, wan. Normally, she would have come up earlier than this, so I assume the volcano is more active this year, wan. Regardless, she’ll probably come up within the next few days, wan.”**

As expected, her prediction was right. A few days after that conversation, to be exact, in the last week of the second month, when I went to give my regular report to the Earl, Sophna was there as well.

## Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\]](#) ねとり(**netori**)[\[vndb\]](#) is when the male main character does the stealing, in contrast to 寝取られ(**netorare**)[\[wiki\]](#).



I immediately said hello.

“Hello, Sophna.”

**“Ah, hello, Miss Sophna.”**

She could have easily guessed that I was here to give my regular report, but Sii was next to me as well. Sii bowed her head in a panic. Although Sophna ignored my greeting, she raised her hand and received Sii’s.

I glanced around the room during their small exchange. The Earl wasn’t here.

“Did the Earl go somewhere?”

Sophna smiled cynically.

“There is no reason for you to know.”

I simply nodded my head in response. There was no reason for me to tell her that I was here in order to give my regular report, and in order to do so, I had to obviously meet the Earl. As Sophna herself already knew this, there was also someone else present that was capable of saying it better than me.

**“Y-Yujin is here to meet Her Excellency the Earl…….”**

Sii spoke carefully. Sophna let out a sigh and thumped her staff against the floor.

“Speak in Korean.”

Sii’s face became red.

“It’s embarrassing because I’m still poor at it…….”

“You will get better if you continue to use it. Simply use it for now. It is natural to gradually become better at the things you are poor at.”

She sounded like a grandmother who was talking to her granddaughter. Her icy gaze had softened as well.

If you consider the fact that Sii’s evaluation of Sophna had always been strangely generous, this must be how they usually interact with each other. Different from me who was a stone that had tumbled here from another world, Sii had inherited the blood of her ancestors, in other words, the blood of the first earl, Sophna’s comrade.

If you think about it like that, then there’s one thing I didn’t understand, but.

“Yeah~~ Yujin said something similar as well! He said that you can only fix problems if you face them consistently!”

Regardless, it seems that genes with the inability to read the mood were mixed in that ancestor’s blood as well. Sophna’s smile became cold once more.

“That fellow said that? Kuhuhu. That Ahyeon person was like that as well, but it seems that Koreans have genes which make them good at blabbering with their mouths.”

I had already vaguely pieced together the fact that Ahyeon was a good speaker, and this was something that Roroa had confirmed for me as well. Furthermore, the instant I met her, I knew that Sophna disliked Ahyeon.

Was it for the same reason as Roroa? Because he had talked big about changing the city? Because he had abruptly disappeared despite having said that? In the first place, what happened to Ahyeon, to the Twelve Bullets that the Earl had summoned?

Roroa said that she didn’t know and Zia said she couldn’t answer.



Sophna, this woman most likely knows.

She's most likely showing this sort of attitude——because she knows.

“I-I’m sorry…… Are you mad?”

Sophna’s expression softened once more in response to Sii’s flustered words.

“You are not the one I am upset at.”

As I thought, she was too lax. If she answers like that, then that means that she was indeed mad. She should have said ‘I’m not upset’ just now. If she did, then.

“Are you mad at Yujin……?”

She could have avoided being asked this question by Sii.

“It is unrelated to you.”

“No, it’s related. Yujin is a precious person to me.”

Sophna drew her brows together. Sii was frightened, but she did her best to not back down and continued.

“I personally, don’t know why Miss Sophna is so unhappy with Yujin. But, yup, regardless of that, Yujin is precious to me. I can’t, yup, I can’t just stand by and watch Yujin be treated harshly in front of me. I.”

I, Sii spoke. I, she brought both of her hands together as she spoke and bowed her head.

“Please don’t hate Yujin.”

Sophna’s face became rigid like a pine tree that had aged a millennium. She turned to look at me.

“It seems that you and Sii have gotten quite close despite not having been here for long. For you to have exerted your evil influence over such a small girl. Is there a single reason why I should trust that sort of libertine?”

Should I try provoking her? ‘If it’s trust, then I’m receiving plenty from both Sii and the Earl.’ No. Provocations are something you do when you can obtain something besides firm hostility, and there’s nothing that can be gained right now. Should I bow? ‘You’re right. Thank you for enlightening me.’ As I thought, this wouldn’t work either. This would only sound sarcastic. If it’s like that, then it’s no different to having provoked her.

I glimpsed at Sii.

“I couldn’t leave a tormented girl by herself.”

Sii, who was breathing heavily as the price for having squeezed out her courage, was startled. I carefully observed Sophna’s face.

Sophna didn’t say anything. She most likely had no other choice but to stay silent. This was because she was probably aware of what topic would be brought up if she were to say something here. Therefore, silence ensued and it was important for me to grasp what emotion it was that was acting as a foothold for her silence. Because that emotion was going to determine how I responded to her from now on.

Taken aback because she was caught off guard? Anger for not being able to speak more? Anger towards me? Those were all present. However, those things were similar to a type of impurity. There were other core emotions.

It was remorse.

And regret.

“Bite off all Twelve Fingers.”

An intruding voice broke the silence. Sophna held her staff close to her body before making a stern face.

“Mii, how many times have I told you not to use such foul words?”

“Huu~? I see that you’re nagging right in my face now. Did your senility go rampant because you shut yourself in your room for too long? Dementia confirmed?”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke with a displeased face. Although this was a scene that revealed the fact that she wasn’t lazy when it came to taking in all of the latest jokes from the iPad I had downloaded a bunch of content onto when I was back on Earth, her tone was too venomous for me to point something like that out. Sophna seemed to have realized this as well as she straightened her face.

“I see that things did not go well. If there is something that I can do, then tell me.”

“YesYesYes. Of course you would. But how could I do such a thing? You’re a busy formal member of the Mage Tower. How could I make a request of a busy person who’s having it easy by using the central water source as an excuse?”

“Mii!”

“Ah ha, what’s this? Are you shouting in front of me?”

It was like a volatile situation had materialized. Both the Silver Lion Earl and Sophna didn’t budge an inch as they glared at each other. However, that confrontation didn’t last for long. Sophna lamented.

“Are you upset?”

“What, should I be excited, then? Ah ha, I see that the great teacher is now going to lecture me on how and when I should be happy. All riight, you’re a hikikomori spinster so you’re probably experienced when it comes to masturbation. Your ability also revolves around plants, so you must have reached rank 1 when it comes to tentacle

play.”

**“Vines, tangle, raise.”**

A light started to radiate from the end of Sophna’s staff. Tentacles sprouted out from a section of empty space that had cracked open and entangled the Silver Lion Earl. The Silver Lion Earl struggled.

“Gaauuuu! Let, let me go right this instaaant!”



“I will let you go once you have settled down.”

“Damn it, damn you!! Are you, are you not going to listen to me!? Are you disobeying the lord!? Release me! Release me this instant, you hag!! Freckles! Tentacle monster! You burning pine treeeee!!”

Although Sophna had a regrettable expression on her face, she didn't release her magic. The Silver Lion Earl soon exhausted herself and started to pant. It wasn't until that moment did Sophna release her spell. The Silver Lion Earl only gnashed her teeth and didn't say anything in response.

I was a bit surprised by this series of events. Genuine magic, the Silver Lion Earl being treated in this manner, and the Silver Lion Earl's reaction, these were all things that I was seeing for the first time.

She was this type of person.

The Silver Lion Earl, was a person who was capable of showing this side of herself.

This was something which I already knew in my head, but knowing about something and seeing it for yourself were two clearly different things.

“Silver Lion Earl.”

“Ah, Mr. Yujin. And the unwelcomed baggage next to you. Have you been doing well? As you can see, I'm not doing well right now.”

The baggage next to me that was supposedly unwelcomed was bowing her head. The Silver Lion Earl had an expression on her face that said that she was more annoyed by Sii's very attitude, but she didn't say anything. There was also the fact that I had offered her a seat before she could say anything.

The Earl sat down on the chair. Normally, I would have

immediately gone into the massage right now, but thoughtlessly touching a cat that's raising its hair would only leave claw marks.

I took out a thermos. I poured out a cup of pre-heated hot chocolate and handed it to her.

"Mii, you shouldn't drink some unknown concoction like that. Put it down. If you need something to drink, then I will boil you some of my medicinal herbs."

The Silver Lion Earl cast a sidelong glance at Sophna before bringing the rim of the cup to her lips. However, Sophna only sighed as she watched the grouchy Earl and didn't try to forcefully take the cup away.

One gulp, two gulps. I calculated the exact moment of when she would take her third gulp before I handed the thermos over to Sii and got down on one knee in front of the Silver Lion Earl.

Once I waited for a moment, the Silver Lion Earl stuck her right foot out towards me.

"Mii! You must not allow a person like him to touch your royal....."

"Sophna, please."

Sophna let out a sigh for the umpteenth time. The Silver Lion Earl glared at Sophna while still extending her foot towards me.

I reverently held the Silver Lion Earl's extended foot and caressed it as if I were wiping a gem.

"You're like a swallow."

The Silver Lion Earl grumbled. I lowered my head and raised it as if I had been complimented.

"Will you tell me what happened?"

“I don’t waaant to.”

The Silver Lion Earl responded while pressing her hand against her cheek. I simply shrugged and focused on my task at hand. The Silver Lion Earl emptied her cup during that time. Sii approached and received the cup from her.

The silence persisted for a while after, so I managed to massage the Earl’s left foot as well. During that time, this girl, who was twisting her body around while still pressing her hand against her cheek, glimpsed at Sophna for a moment before letting out a sigh.

“I’m sorry.”

Sophna, who was holding her staff close to her chest, twitched. The Silver Lion Earl scratched the back of her head.

“Shit———Damn it, just stop lecturing mee. Am I some sort of child? No, if you’re going to lecture me, then do it regularly. The fact that that’s the first thing you do after shutting yourself in your room for so long…… Ah, whatever. Grandma. In any case, I’m sorry about getting annoyed at you.”

This must have come off as a surprise since Sophna was bewildered.

“No, Mii. There is nothing for you to apologize…….”

“It’s something I have to apologize about, I’m apologizing right now, and you should just accept that apology, so, please. Okay?”

“Mii…….”

“YeahYeahYeahYeah. I’ve grown up, right? I’m cute, right? I already know, so don’t bother mentioning it. Hmph. In any case, Mr. Yujin, that drink was tasty. I could feel the blood and sweat of the child laborers whose backs are crooked due to being overworked in those cacao farms within the Polynesian archipelagos. Pour me some more.”



“Your teeth will go bad.”

“Like hell. Since when did I start being surrounded by a bunch of health fanatics? Let me just consume whatever I want and die. How long do you think life will last for anyway?”

“You can live for up to 187 years, right? Like Yudia or Head Vassal Sophna over there.”

Although Sophna furrowed her brow at being mentioned in such a familiar manner, the Silver Lion Earl laughed before she could do or say anything.

“Ah hah ha. You really are a swallow. You never miss out on an opportunity to flatter a girl, huh?”

“I simply don’t miss out on an opportunity to flatter my superiors.”

The Earl broke out in laughter once more so Sophna was unable to snap at me and ask something along the lines of ‘who are you calling your superior?’.

“You’re riiight. Nominally, Mr. Yujin is below Zia, Zia is a part of the Silver Lion Royal Guard, and grandma is the leader of the Silver Lion Royal Guard. That means she’s your superior by 2 ranks. Ah ha, these sorts of things are fun when you think about them. But, well…….”

The Silver Lion Earl folded her arms and looked at me with a grin.

“Even if you live for a long time, how should I say it, it’s not a good thing, you know? Hugugugugu. You’ll either end up seeing a whole bunch of dirty things like grandma over there, or you’ll personally create those sorts of dirty things like Yudia, you know? There’s that saying in Korea, isn’t there? If you live for too long, then you’ll defecate all over the walls. It’s like that.”

“That depends on how you spend your time. Imagine shutting yourself in your room for 187 years just playing games.”

“Oh, that’s tempting. I acknowledge good-natured hikikomori activities.”

The Silver Lion Earl giggled and patted me on the head. Not with her feet, but with her hand. Considering her current posture, she had to bend forward in order to do that, so the fact that she had gone through the effort to pat my head meant that her mood was better now. As if to prove my assumption, the Silver Lion Earl was still smiling even when she turned to face Sii.

“Mikatni’s adopted daughter. You really lack foresight. Hurry up and pour me another glass.”

“Ah, yes……!”

Sii poured the Earl another glass of hot chocolate. This must have been the most nerve-wracking moment for Sii today, but thankfully, something like Sii spilling the hot chocolate everywhere and ruining the mood didn’t happen.

The Silver Lion Earl held the cup with both of her hands and stuck her tongue in the hot chocolate.

“Huah. This is nice. It would be perfect if I had some unsweet snacks.”

“Mii, is it truly okay? There might be something bad in there.”

“Ah, please. It’s fiine. Sophna, you probably aren’t aware since you’ve been holed up until now, but I’ve already eaten a lot of the stuff that Mr. Yujin had brought. In other words, if he intended to drug me, then he would have done so much sooner. However, I’m perfectly fine right now, hence, Mr. Yujin wouldn’t do something like that. It’s logical, right? Open bracket, a passing logician gave his acknowledgment, close bracket.”

I did consider putting something like nervine in her food, but messing with the food of a noble was a risk which I couldn’t possibly take.

Not right now.

If you consider that situation, then it was absolutely right for Sophna to be wary.

“Are you telling me that you trust that boy?”

Albeit, she nagged a lot.

The Silver Lion Earl slanted her eyes once more. Her expression appeared as if it were asking ‘Is there a problem with that?’ and she would have actually said that out loud.

But I spoke up before she could.

“It’s you whom she trusts.”

The Silver Lion Earl tilted her head. I turned to face Sophna and continued.

“She believes that I wouldn’t dare to do something in poor taste while in your presence. Even if I did, she believes that you’ll take care of it somehow.” I paused for a moment before I continued. “Of course, you’re most likely already aware of this.”

Sophna was unable to speak. This was an obvious conclusion as every path which she could take to speak on had been blocked. Although this was a situation which should have naturally upset her, and in truth, her face was also frozen, she couldn’t say anything in return. It’s probably because the Earl was in front of her. She was a good vassal who, despite nagging a lot, knew when and where she should take it out on someone. She was a person who knew how to carry out something that appeared obvious but was actually difficult to act out.

“Acting like you know it all.”

The Silver Lion Earl grinned as she pinched my cheek with her toes. I turned my head and lightly kissed her foot.

“That’s how you’re actually thinking, isn’t it?”

“Really, you overindulge in flattery. A disloyal subject? Or a eunuch? Are you even able to get erect?”

Like I said, I wasn’t flattering anyone. Despite all of the words and actions she had spoken and displayed until now, if one were to ask whom the Earl trusted more sincerely, then it would most likely be Sophna and not me.

If I confuse this fact, then I’ll end up dead.

Let’s not forget this.

In any case, the Earl was satisfied. Sophna was also quiet.

Therefore, the time had arrived.

“In any case, Earl, can you tell me why you were upset earlier?”

“Hmm, well, it’s not a big deal, all things considered, but——you heard that some big guests will be arriving soon, right?”

“Is it related to those guests?”

“Yes. Early next month, a person from my mother’s side of the family will be coming.”

The Silver Lion Earl stated while resting her chin on her hand.



The House of the Cat Earl.

As they were a part of Lady Blizzard Cat, the Silver Lion Earl's mother's household, they were, in other words, the Silver Lion Earl's family on her mother's side.

It was a reputable house that had produced gifted individuals that were either skilled at commerce or elemental magic.

Full Moon Cat Earl, as she was the current head of the Cat Earl Household, she was also the Silver Lion Earl's oldest aunt, and while she was a middle executive of the Fedchants, she also managed the role as the branch manager of the Mage Tower's 8th branch which was also known as the 'Elemental Branch'.

"I naturally don't like them."

The Silver Lion Earl spoke as if she were spitting out her words.

"They didn't do anything when I was kidnapped or even when my mother had passed away. Well, this, I can understand. Not only do people naturally cherish their own lives, but these fellows, they were blessed with fecundity so they produce a lot of children. To them, my mother was most likely nothing more than just one of their many other siblings, and compared to her, I was probably nothing more than one of their many nieces. That's why I understand. The issue is that among those people, there were some that had even stuck their spoons in."

"Are you certain?"

"I don't have any proof that I can make public. But I'm certain."

It would probably be dangerous if I asked her whether that was just a strong suspicion or not. I decided to stay silent. That must have been the right answer as the roughly breathing Silver Lion Earl continued.

"I saw several people while I was confined. Even though they were wearing masks and had altered their voices, I could see through an obvious ploy like that with just a glance. Once things were resolved, I

summoned the fellows that I could summon and sure enough, they confessed after I played around with them a little.”

Summoning.

“Nevertheless, there were also bastards who I couldn’t summon for various reasons. So I had to go through some hardship for a while because they had tattled to the Twelve Earthly Branches and the special corps had arrived……Did I tell you about this before?”

“Yeah. I heard that it was because you had executed condemned criminals on your own volition, but I also heard that there was more to it than that.”

“Yeess. This is the actual reason. They were suspected of assassination. Seriously, how could they be so rude to such a simple person like me? Regardless, the disposal of the pieces of evidence was perfect. I was freed from suspicion because the grotesque executions that remained on record were only targeted at prisoners who were already legally sentenced to death. I had to go through some trouble because I got caught for steaming the son of one of the city’s community leaders to death, but it wasn’t enough to be a lasting problem. Hurray for noble power. Yay.”

The Silver Lion Earl licked her nails as she said that. Sophna had a grief-stricken expression on her face.

“But it’s true that my freedom to move has become limited. I can’t necessarily say that I’m no longer capable of doing something like that again, but I’ll have to be more careful from now on. Nyanyanya. Therefore, Mr. Yujin, would I not be stressed because of this? What do you think this poor, stressed out little girl should have done?”

I couldn’t say that, at the very least, she shouldn’t have tortured beings from other worlds. However, I was unable to hide my emotions completely. No matter how much I resolved myself, in the end, I was just human.

My heart felt heavy and ached as if it were being filled with lead.

The Silver Lion Earl must have noticed that aching as she made a pleased face. Ah hah hah ha. She let out a laugh before crossing her legs and bobbing her foot.

I kneeled down once more and obediently brought my lips to it. The Silver Lion Earl stroked my head with her other foot and continued.

“Hugugugu. It’s because of this very reason, ah hah ha, that it would only be appropriate for Mr. Yujin to also despise the Cat Earl Household. Yup, you can’t ignore the fact that those bastards are also partially responsible for the people of your world, Mr. Yujin, being hurt. If they hadn’t squealed on me, then my irritation gauge wouldn’t have maxed out. This Silver Lion Earl can say with confidence that they’re approximately 30% responsible——Gya hah ha ha?!”

“Was that too strong?”

“It was! Tell me beforehand if you’re going to tickle me. Seriously, Mr. Yujin, you don’t know what fair play is.”

“Sorry. The sole of your foot was too pretty.”

“Hmph. You’re really shallow, Mr. Yujin. If you think that you can make every girl in the world feel happy just by calling them pretty, then you’re making a huge mistake.”

Despite those words, the Silver Lion Earl was grinning. She put aside the unpleasant topic and returned to talking about the House of the Cat Earl.

“In any case, the person coming this time is one of their esteemed daughters who’s also known as Dansoomyo(丹燧猫, Vorpall Rabbit). She’s the third daughter of the Full Moon Cat Earl and she specializes in fire magic. She’s also an honorable executive of a Fedchant branch. She’s a gambling fanatic as well. I have to admit that her title of ‘red flint’ suits her.”

“The Chinese characters and the English words don’t match at all

this time as well.”

“Like I said, it’s my own chuunibyō-like naming sense. Dansoomyo(丹燧猫) and Dansoomyo(斷首卯). Well, the general title that’s referred to in this world is closer to the former.”[\[1\]](#)

“I don’t understand this title system.”

“Do you think I understand it? It’s similar to an achievement system. Nobles are cash users so they can get them easily. Albeit, their slots are determined by their noble title. Also, well, they just add your characteristics as a part of your title. Since I have messy silver hair, Silver Lion. Yudia is like a purple swamp, so Violet Swamp of Poison. And Sophna over there is like a yellowish-green plant, so Yellow-Green Grass. Zia is blue and has a cold appearance, so Azure Rose.”

“Azure Rose Knight, Zia Batsand…….”

“Do you get why I said I didn’t understand either? Just think of world-class titles like ‘Draconian Demonic Spear’ and ‘Universal Summoner’ as platinum trophies. Is there anything else you’re curious about?”

Something I’m curious about, huh? I nodded my head and spoke.

“Earl, your name, Mii———.”

“I’ll kill you.”

Mm.

“I’ll kill you, Mr. Yujin. I’m serious. I’ll reaaally kill you. If you understand, then don’t say even a single word about that. Okay?”

The retorting Silver Lion Earl’s face was red, which was a rare sight.

I knew I shouldn’t have asked. But how could I not ask……? Even though she told me to ask her anything…….



No. This isn't the time for that.

"In any case, you're saying that an irritating relative is coming."

"That's right. She's a psycho I don't want to be associated with. It'd be great if she didn't come. I want to lock the door and enjoy a happy, happy torture life."

"I feel like you could just tell her to not come, but if that were possible, then you would have probably done so already. Why's that?"

"I have a debt."

Debt, huh?

"A psychological one? The thing you mentioned earlier?"

"No. Not something I have to receive. It's a physical debt I have to give to her. It may be surprising, but even a riajuu, alpha girl like myself, who's perfect at everything, has a slightly extravagant personality."

"It's not surprising."

I had said this to Zia as well, but this was something I could tell just by looking at her attire.

"Why did you become indebted to people you don't like?"

"I didn't hate them back when I initially became indebted. It's something that happened when I was really young. Back around the time when my parents were still around, there were things that I wanted to do, so I poked a little into my mother's side of the family. Weeell, to be more exact, the exchange has already been completed, so it's difficult to call it a debt, but there were a couple of things that were handed over."

"So you can't act aggressively with them."

"Yeesss. Well, it's like that. I can't stop them if they say they're

going to come. Isn't that unfair, Mr. Yujin? Hugugugu. It's annoying, but there are things that can't be helped while you live your life. That kind of feeling, I guess? Something like that."

"Do you know why she's coming?"

"Who knows? She's a crazy bitch who I can't make head nor tail of. I feel like she might be coming to either find fault with the Fedchant business that happened previously, mess around with me, provoke me, or to do something related to the Mage Tower. ETCETC."

"Let her come!"

Sophna shouted grandly.

"In the first place, bringing the two households together is what I wanted to bring about. Tell her to come. I shall help however I can."

The Silver Lion Earl propped her chin on her hand.

"Heeh. You're rather zealous. Even though you're probably going to use the central water source as an excuse to shut yourself in when she actually arrives."

"I had set up some fences in order to make it so that I do not have to worry about it for a while. That is why I took more time this year. If I do the finishing touches, then I should be able to stay above ground until the city settles down."

"Hmm."

The Silver Lion Earl, who was being apathetic, raised the corners of her mouth.

"Haamng."

Her smile thickened.

"Ah hah hah ha ha. Hm, what's this? Did you take the wrong medication? Are you really suffering from dementia? I heard that

when people abruptly start to do things which they normally don't do, it means that their deaths are near. Is it something like that? Should I think of it like this?"

Her tone was still filled with haughtiness, but there was no venom in her words now. The Silver Lion Earl was sincerely being happy about Sophna's words, the fact that Sophna had done something for her sake.

That fact——at the very least, I could feel it, and from what I could tell, Sophna felt it as well.

"I see that you are a lot brighter now."

The Silver Lion Earl let out a 'Hmm~?' sound before hopping up from her seat.

"I'm always bright. Always sunshine!"

Sophna wordlessly watched the Silver Lion Earl as she gave that response. The Silver Lion Earl pouted and sat back down with her chin on her hand again.

I decided to come forward.

"I'll also help in whatever way that I can."

The Silver Lion Earl grinned.

"Ah ha, of course you will. Why do you think I called the both of you here at the same time?"

I thought Sophna was here to denounce me. Sophna turned to look at me with eyes that didn't have even a sliver of the affection which they had when they looked at the Silver Lion Earl and spoke.

"Mii, I am more than enough."

The Silver Lion Earl's expression changed to a frown. Sophna appeared apologetic, but she still said what she wanted to say.

“I’m saying this for your sake. Even in an insignificant magic experiment, it is best to lower the total number of variables.”

The Silver Lion Earl took in a deep breath. Was she going to shout again?

She wasn’t.

“Can something not be done?”

Surprisingly, the Silver Lion Earl had taken a step back and said that.

“Mr. Yujin is smart. I’m sure he’ll be helpful. Caaan’t, you do something?”

Sophna looked at the Silver Lion Earl with bewildered eyes. It was an expression that I had seen multiple times today. With those words, I had another opportunity to speak.

“I’ll be in your care, Miss Head Vassal.”

I shook Sophna’s hand as I said that.

Sophna gnashed her teeth. However, the Silver Lion Earl had an earnest expression on her face. After a short period of time, Sophna returned my handshake. Her touch felt like the roots of trees that were burrowing into a bog.

“Do not impede my work.”

The Silver Lion Earl was watching the two of us while we were like that while supporting her chin with both of her hands. It seems like she believed that things were going to be better for the time being. On the other hand, Sii had an apprehensive expression on her face.

If possible, both Sophna and I would have probably given our votes to Sii’s apprehension.



I'll wrap up our current situation.

First, a guest from the Earl's mother's side of the family will be arriving soon.

Second, the representative of the debtor's household was most likely coming here in order to quibble about the previous incident related to the Fedchants that had occurred.

Third, thus I decided to help.

Fourth, along with Sophna.

How simple.

"Is it simple? Yujin, you got wrapped up in another troublesome task again, right?"

Sii asked that with a worried voice. I, who was lying on the bed and organizing my plan on my iPad, responded in this world's language.

**"The most troublesome matters are the ones that can't be grasped. In other words, problems where you don't know how far the issues go and you have no idea how to handle it. Our current situation is simple since I have both a clear understanding of it and a method to cope with it."**

"Mm~~ is that so..... But, Yujin, I."

**“Talk in this language. The other two have to hear it as well.”**

Sii puffed out her cheeks, but she obeyed meekly.

**“But Yujin, this doesn’t seem simple to me at all. Of course, Miss Sophna is a good person, but she disapproves of you, Yujin.”**

That was the truth. The instant we left the office together, Sophna glared at me with harsh eyes. ‘I will definitely catch you red-handed’, those were her final words to me before she left.

**“Like that, the cooperation itself is already unstable, but adding to that, for us to have to face the Cat Earl Household while bearing that unstable cooperation. This is seriously ominous beyond measure.”**

**“It seems that I’ll need some information on the Cat Earl Household and that Lady Dansoomyo. If you know anything, then please tell me.”**

Ariya was the one to answer that question and not Sii. The girl who was lying in the same bed turned to face me.

**“There are rumors that they are the wealthiest family in this entire region. There are even more rumors than that about their cruelty. Even if you consider the fact that they are an earl’s household, the Cat Earl Household is said to be cruel to an unnatural degree.”**

Roroa had said something similar. Ariya glimpsed at me before continuing.

**“However, the wife of the previous earl was a person of elegance despite being from the Cat Earl Household.”**

If you consider the Silver Lion Earl’s personality, then it might be genes that affect every second generation.

Now that I think about it.

**“What kind of people were the previous earl and his wife?”**

**“His Excellency the Earl was a moderate person. There was nothing special about him other than the fact that he was lecherous. His wife, on the other hand, was an excellent person. Befitting her title of Blizzard Cat, she was skillful at handling cold and wind magic, and although she couldn’t reach Miss Sophna’s level, she was impressive enough to be able to at least stand shoulder to shoulder with Miss Zaho.”**

**“Zaho?”**

Alshi, who was lying right next to Ariya, took the baton. She was discharged from the infirmary earlier today, so she had moved to this room.

**“Zaho Naricpitor. She’s currently one of the city’s community leaders and she was Her Excellency the Earl’s, nanny. The name of the House of Naricpitor itself is famous for producing clothing, but Miss Zaho is more famous as a mage. She even has the title Azure Water Lotus(藍水蓮).”**

Another title holder, huh.

No———more importantly.

**“If she was a nanny, then,”** I recalled an age-old piece of information, **“is she perhaps, Zia’s?”**

**“Yes. Fair Grace. She’s Miss Zia’s mother.”**

Ariya was the one to answer. For that unidentified organism known as Zia to have a biological mother, well, all things considered, this was an obvious fact but it gave me a peculiar feeling.

At the same time, it also brought a question to my head.

**“But Zia doesn’t use Naricpitor as her family name.”**

The only family name Zia used was that of her teacher’s, ‘Batsand’. Was it perhaps a tradition of Martial Origin to discard the family name you were born with and use your teacher’s family name?

That didn’t seem to be the case as Ariya shook her head.

**“She used it in the past.”**

**“Then why is she only using Batsand as her family name?”**

**“I apologize, Fair Grace, but I believe that’s something you should hear from Miss Zia herself.”**

It was a polite but stern refusal. Not only was that a reasonable response, but this wasn’t what was important right now either.

What was important was,

**“Ariya. Can you move a bit more to the side? Your chest keeps touching my face, so back up a bit. This is an order.”**

Ariya obeyed my command and laid down further away from me. This action was followed by quietly covering her chest, which had been touching my face, with a flushed face and averting her gaze. Even though they didn’t have as much volume or sensation to them as Sii’s did.

In that moment, Alshi shoved her hands underneath Ariya’s arms and grabbed onto her volumeless chest.

**“Hauh! .....A-Alshi. What are you doing?”**

**“I’m covering them, for you.”**

**“But everyone is watching…….”**

**“So? That’s why I’m covering them, with my hands.”**



After saying that, Alshi blew into the nape of Ariya's neck. Ariya's face became bright red.

**“Alshi…… Uu, auh, w-wait. If you do that…….”**

**“D-Didn't I tell you to not do perverted things like that!?”**

Sii also became red and shouted. Alshi giggled and started to gnaw on the nape of Ariya's neck. Ariya's head rolled up smoothly to a 37.1 degrees angle. While that happened, Ariya's volumeless chest was being massaged by Alshi's small hands.

**“Seriously! What are you doing!?”**

Sii exclaimed once more. After sucking on Ariya's neck long enough to leave a mark, Alshi spoke.

**“It's something we used to do every, night. It's also something that we couldn't do for a while because Ariya had, moved here. That's why I'm doing it in celebration of my move here, is there a problem?”**

**“There is! Things like that go against the way of nature! You can't do that!”**

Those words were similar to what racists and homophobic people of any world would say. Regardless, Alshi displayed an amused face.

**“Why does it go, against nature?”**

**“You can't have a child!”**

Those words were similar to what homophobes, the rest is omitted. Alshi broke apart that logic with ease.

**“So you're saying that petting that can't make children goes against, the way of nature? Then what about you, who's doing that with a person who's a different race and from, a different world?”**

Mm.

**“Yujin and I are able to have kids!”**

Wait.

**“Ara. Is that, possible?”**

**“Yujin! It’s possible, right? Tell her that it’s possible! Quickly!”**

Sii was shouting while holding onto my shoulders with hands that were hot enough to warm the air. According to the theory of evolution, it should be impossible since we’re already different species.

Were we different? Even though our individual races evolved through completely different methods, was it possible to evolve into such similar looking species? Using some creative works as an example, similar to Peacekeeper and Ancients, were the people of this world related to the people of Earth?

However, starting from the crack in their eyes, the thing which the people of this world referred to as the ‘inner eye’, there were several differences in terms of body structure. According to the Silver Lion Earl, there was also a difference in the number of bones and joints in the body——frankly, it seems that there’s a bone, to be more exact, a joint in the genitalia of the males in this world——If you consider the fact that a human can’t have a child with an orangutan…….

No, why am I even contemplating this?

**“Conclusion. A lady from a rich family that’s said to be cruel is coming.”**

**“Don’t change the subject~!!”**

Sii shook my neck with a tearful face. Alshi grinned and removed her hands from Ariya’s chest.

**“That’s a coarse but precise, conclusion. But there’s one thing. If it’s Lady Dansoomyo, then it isn’t a rumor.”**

There was a moment of silence.

**“What do you mean?”**

Ariya, who had melted into a piece of chocolate during a summer day, caught her breath and answered.

**“It’s just as she……said……. If I refer to the several times we had received her as a guest…… haa, then Lady Dansoomyo is indeed an unnaturally cruel…… person. Sii, you know as well since you saw her last year…… right? That large woman…… who brought a bunch of slaves.”**

**“Uu…… I remember. It was terrible, seriously.”**

**“Yes……. It was to the point that that Mari had to help clean the torture chamber. Of course, it’s also because Miss Sophna had instructed her to help…….”**

I turned back to Sii. We were lying in the same bed, so the light emitting from the iPad was enough to illuminate Sii’s face.

**“That’s why I said that earlier, Yujin. That you got caught up in something troublesome again.”**

I then realized that Sii and Ariya were making the same face. As expected, it seems that Alshi didn’t massage Ariya and tease Sii just for fun.

It was tension.

And anxiety.

**“I guess we’ll have to up our preparations more.”**

Those were my words.

## Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\]](#) “丹燧貓” can be read as “Red Flint Cat” and “斷首卯” can be read as “Vorpal Rabbit”. Additionally, “丹燧貓” and “斷首卯” are pronounced the exact same way.



That day was a day where I got whipped. This was because Chanmi had decided that that would be the case after school on every Tuesday and Friday.

Chanmi had decided a lot of things outside of that as well. The whipping standards, the method of whipping, the body posture one should have while whipping, etc, she had determined all of these things. Only the people who followed those standards strictly and passed Chami's test could hold the whip.

The person who had earned the qualification to whip me on that day was the girl who would always sit behind me in class. If Chanmi was the Silver Lion Earl, then this girl's position was somewhere between Zia and Ariya. Although she did gradually grow a habit of speaking in a cringeworthy way that would suit that position, that was something that happened later on, so at that time, she was just like an untrained Beagle.

On that day, I collapsed onto my knees after the thirty-eighth strike. It wasn't a special score or anything. I remembered that day not because of that, but because of what the girl said to me while rubbing medicine on my back after she was done.

Did it hurt?

Of course, I couldn't tell her that it hurt. As I was still lethargic since this was prior to Minhee transferring to our school, I had also just been whipped. The girl who sat behind me in class smiled brightly as she patted my whip-mark riddled back with an audible smack.

It's all right, the Miss is a splendid person. She will also one day be the person to shoulder this entire country. When that day comes, the pain you're feeling now will all be rewarded.

You probably understand why I had referred to her as an untrained Beagle. The girl who used to be seated behind me had said something completely illogical as if it were a math equation. Her tone was bright and didn't have even a single ounce of hostility in it.

That lit a fire inside of me.

I got upset. I shouted at her and asked her how she could do such a thing. Tears streamed down my face. I cried often back then. I don't even remember what was said, but I do remember that my tears had filled my throat so much that I could no longer speak.

I also remember the girl's reaction.

The girl who used to sit behind me was bewildered.

Why are you upset? She said those words with an expression on her face that looked as if she truly didn't expect this to happen. Eh, why? Why exactly? Was there anything in what I had said just now that could upset you? I consoled you. I comforted you, didn't I? I also taught you something that you didn't know, right? Why? Why exactly?

Aha, the girl let out a sound and appeared as if she had come to a realization. I see now. My explanation was lacking, she muttered to herself. Then, with a face and tone that appeared as if she were telling me a secret, she told me this:

The Miss actually cherishes you.

Do you still not understand? You probably don't. You don't seem too bright after all. Look at how you were being whipped. For example, my posture when I whipped you. Why do you think the Miss regulates this so strictly? She does these things so you don't get hurt. So you don't become disabled. See, you didn't know that, right? Aren't you seriously moved? The girl who used to sit behind me had said those words with sincerity and without any hostility whatsoever. She spoke while smiling.

Do you now get a gist of how much the Miss is acting for your sake?



There were two meanings to when I said that we had to up our preparations. One was that we had to gather information, and the other was physical preparations.

Fortunately, there was a way to deal with both of these at the same time.

Two days later, I first visited Sophna.

“Hi.”

Sophna, who was reading a book in the head vassal office, made a fed up expression.

“You are acting overly familiar.”

She didn’t have the same flat-out cold attitude as she did back when we were in the Earl’s office. It wasn’t difficult to see that her coldness wasn’t gone, but instead, it had simply been put away somewhere inside of her. Once I approached her politely and expressed my respect, I noticed that the book she was reading was written in English.

“You know how to read English?”

“Should I not?”



“I just thought it was impressive.”

“Throughout my entire life, I have familiarized myself with magic. Something like the language of another world cannot be even considered as an obstacle to my research. Rather, do you know how to read it?”

*“There is nothing like dancing after all. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished society.”* “There is nothing like dancing after all. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished society.’ *Pride and Prejudice*, huh.”<sup>[1]</sup>

I didn’t expect to see a classic masterpiece from Earth in another world. Sophna chuckled at me who was reminiscing.

“I am on the side of agreeing with the line after that. *Every savage can dance*. ‘Every savage can dance.’ Kuhuhu, of course, Darcy is a bastard that always uses the words that are said against the people who had said them, but there is some value in these words. The act of dancing is incapable of becoming an indicator that can discriminate between civilization and savagery.”

“What do you think that means?”

“In what way are they cruel? In that regard, Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl is an unquestionably civilized individual.”

After saying that with a smile, Sophna put her short pipe in her mouth.

“In any case, why are you here?”

“I heard that one of the merchant groups managed by Lady Dansoomyo had arrived.”

Sophna removed her short pipe from her lips. Instead of tobacco, there was boiling herbal water in the pipe.

“Who told you?”

“Roroa.”

“I heard that the two of you have become rather friendly recently.”

I also knew that Sophna would already know, so that’s why I told her who it was. If that weren’t the case, then I wouldn’t have mentioned anything that could possibly be linked to Roroa.”

“I have something I want to talk to them about. I plan to go out for a bit, so I was wondering if you would want to come with me.”

“How interesting. Kuhuhu, for a mere squire to ask the head vassal if they could accompany them. Despite also being well aware of the fact that I disapprove of you. I am unsure if I should call you brave or tactless.”

“Probably tactless.”

“I too wish to believe that is the case. However, that would be an injustice. You were able to come out alive, were you not?”

Sophna took a single puff on her pipe.

“It would have been easier for the both of us if you were to have died.”

I stayed silent. Sophna took another puff.

Only the sound of boiling could be heard during this long pause.

“107.”

Sophna spoke.

“Can you guess what this number means?”

I kept my mouth shut.

Sophna flipped a page of her book and continued.

“You were most likely able to endure until now because of your luck, your intelligence, and your speaking ability. Let us see how far you can get with those three things. The instant those three come to an end, you will be the 108th.”

I bowed and removed myself from the room. Sophna didn't even glance at me as I left.



I closed my eyes once I exited the office and entered the hallway.

107.

Of course, I had a guess as to what this number represented.

It was most likely the number of Koreans the Earl had killed.

I thought about the reason why Sophna had told me this. It wasn't difficult. She most likely intended to shake my resolve. 'How do you feel knowing that you're serving a person who had killed 107 of your kind?' 'Do you believe that if it's you, then you won't end up like them?' An instigation to incite anxiety within me.

Although she probably wanted to make me shrink away from the Earl.

If anything, I was told something quite good.

I opened my eyes. I then immediately went to the Silver Lion Earl.

“Earl, I have a request.”

Although the head vassal was reading a classic masterpiece, the Silver Lion Earl was playing a PS Vita. She must have been in an important moment in her game as she deliberately frowned at me.

“Hmm. I said no more pillow talk. How could you make another request when it hasn’t been that long since you’ve moved?”

“It’s related to work. I heard that one of the merchant groups supported by Lady Dansoomyo had arrived at the city. I want to meet with whoever is in charge of their group.”

The Silver Lion Earl fixed her expression.

“Tha——at’s right. All things considered, that bitch is also an executive of Fedchant after all. Although she’s just a branch manager, she’s a sponsor of a fair amount of merchant groups. Hm, are you going to go meet them yourself? Wouldn’t it be better to summon them here?”

“You’ve almost used up all of your summons, right? Furthermore, I’ve also been wanting to go outside of the castle and have a look around the city.”

I said that as I lowered my head. The Silver Lion Earl lowered her game and looked at the back of her hands.

“Hm. Well, I could also just send someone to bring them here, but okay. I understand. But will you be okay? There are people besides the Mage Tower who are after otherworlders and their knowledge, you know? There’s a reason why I haven’t sent you outside of the castle needlessly. Do you perhaps have a hobby of getting kidnapped?”

“I’ll wear sunglasses while I’m on the streets.”

“Oh.” The Silver Lion Earl nodded. “Hm. Still, it’ll be difficult to deceive the people who’re coming after you.”

“At that time, I’ll just believe that you’ll save me somehow.”

Once I declared that while bowing respectfully, the Silver Lion Earl broke out into a grin.

“All right. It’s the hero’s mission to rescue the heroine in distress after all. I just have to crush all of the daring bastards that appear and try to do something ridiculous to my possession. Then let’s say that we’ve dealt with that issue, but what about the other one? This is your first outing.”

She was asking whether my first time outside of the castle would be fun or not because I was going out to do something work-related. I decided to not refuse that concern which was very Silver Lion Earl-like in many different ways.

“That’s why I plan to walk around here and there. There’s also that escort issue you mentioned a second ago, so I’d be grateful if you let me appoint some people to accompany me. I’d also like some allowance.”

“Allowance, huh? That isn’t a problem, but, hugugugu. It’s rather cute since Mr. Yujin is asking for money. The issue is who goes with you, hm. Are you going to go out after sunset?”

“I’m not going to go out immediately. I need some time to prepare. About 2 days.”

“All right. But are you going to go out after sunset?”

“I’m going to leave Sii here.”

The Silver Lion Earl tilted her head.

I continued.

“Like how you’re also concerned, she’s weak to direct sunlight and I can’t make her push herself when her arm hasn’t completely healed yet.”

“Hah? Who said I was worried? If someone were to hear that, then

they'd probably think I'm some sort of silly-hmpher<sup>[2]</sup>."

"Are you going to use that word?"

"As I thought, this is overreaching the limits, isn't it?" The Silver Lion Earl obediently acknowledged her mistake. "What could have the creator of this terrible term been possibly thinking about when they made it?"

"Don't be like that. The person who made it is probably regretting it as well."

"All riight. In any case, I'm not a tsundere or acting coy either. But are you sure that's okay? To leave Mikatni's adopted daughter behind while you go out? I mean, would you be able to relax?"

"I can't always be by her side anyway. It's only going to be for half a day, so I doubt much will happen. I also plan to make Alshi keep her company."

"Haanm. I guess it's almost the end of the month as well, isn't it? Mr. Yujin has to return to Korea for a while, so she'll have to be by herself."

"I'll put my trust in you."

"If you say something like that, then that makes me want to unnecessarily betray yooouu."

The Silver Lion Earl giggled mischievously. I adjusted my glasses.

That must have been the right response as the Silver Lion Earl asked while grinning.

"How much do you need?"

"I still don't know the value of money here. Just give me enough that I won't lose face no matter where I go."

“Hm. All right. I’ll give you a reasonable amount.”

The Silver Lion Earl put her hands behind her head with her fingers linked together and grinned. If it was a ‘reasonable amount’, then considering the Earl’s extravagant personality, I most likely won’t find myself short of money. Although there was also the possibility that she’ll mess with me and give me only a small sum, if that does happen, I’ll just have to take some from Roroa at that time.

“Is Sophna going to go with you?”

The Silver Lion Earl asked that like a passing comment.

And I.

“No.”

A slight disappointment brushed past the Earl’s face.

“Why’s that? You should have brought it up with her. That you should go together.”

“I did.”

That’s all I said in response.

Although I had gone out of my way to visit Sophna and suggested something that would obviously be refused just so that I could give this answer to the Earl, there was no need to say anything more and it was something that I shouldn’t do either.

I had to thoroughly avoid saying anything ill of Sophna or anything that could even remotely sound like criticism towards her.

The Silver Lion Earl frowned. After staying silent for a brief moment, she opened her desk drawer and took out a small pouch.

“There’s 20,000 vita in this pouch. This should be enough. Think of this as your salary for your first month.”

I smiled in return.

“So you were actually concerned about this.”

“Don’t make me laugh. You’re the one who kept badgering me.”

“Thanks. I’ll use it well…… Earl?”

I had called out to the Silver Lion Earl because she had grabbed the pouch.

“Should we go together?”

This request in itself———wasn’t unexpected.

“I’m bored of my work, I want to go out and get some fresh air, etc etc. I feel like I should sometimes move my hips out of bed? Something like that.”

I thought to myself.

Go outside of the castle together with the Silver Lion Earl. Wander around various places of the Water Dragon City. Although the Earl wouldn’t do anything harsh to citizens who have civil rights, the people who are unaware of that fact will give the Earl a wide berth and fear her. The misunderstanding formed by that gap will most likely cause a fuss. The fusses that happen in those various places will surely be enjoyable. I’ll be able to mediate between the two parties and resolve the misunderstandings.

I believed that that would truly be a warm scene.

I didn’t tell her this.

“Your form wouldn’t look good.”

I answered her like that.

“You’re the lord of the city. Despite that, the fact that you’re personally going to visit a group of merchants. A merchant group



that's being sponsored by your cousin at that. The fact that they're a group of merchants that are a part of the Fedchant which you had caused some trouble with before. This doesn't look good on the surface."

"People will probably get noisy. Well, let them get noisy. That isn't some major problem."

The Silver Lion Earl grumbled. I readjusted my glasses.

"There's a better option."

"What is it?"

"Make them send you an invitation."

The Silver Lion Earl wasn't dumb. Her face didn't relax immediately because she wasn't.

"Hmm, yeah. There won't be any gossip, they'll be the ones who'll have to spend money and be concerned about preparations, and I'll be able to lead the conversation from a dominant position. But why would they abruptly send me an invitation?"

"I'll make them do it."

"Thanks, but wouldn't that seem like I'm fishing for compliments? From guests at that. Wouldn't that be more embarrassing?"

"It's fine if I do it arbitrarily."

The Silver Lion Earl appeared as if she understood.

"Aha, I see. So you're saying that you'll shoulder my authority and go wild."

"Yeah. Like a mayfly that had suddenly gotten hold of an authority that's beyond its means. Boldly, but since a letter of complaint will probably arrive instead of an invitation if I were to act too recklessly, I'll make sure I don't cross the line while I request for their

‘sincerity’.”

“Hmm. And when the invitation comes, I’ll have to take you along with me? So by scolding you a little in front of them, they’ll be able to save face.”

I kissed the tip of the Silver Lion Earl’s foot.

“Isn’t that the duty of a lover?”

Compared to everything else that was said until now, it seems the Silver Lion Earl liked those words the most.

“Ah hah hah ha ha. Mr. Yujin really is cuuute. Makes me really curious as to whether this crazy cuteness is actually legal or not. All right. Pushing your outing back until then should be good enough.”

“By the way, Earl. Even if I do something that may make you somewhat lose face, that was nothing more than an act, so…….”

“Okay! It’s fine. I won’t do something like cut off Mikatni’s adopted daughter’s arm again. I see that has firmly traumatized you. I’m not an idiot. The situation is different. Ah hah ha.”

Good. I got her permission. With this, I should be able to lift my ban on my bastard mode, my radius of action has somewhat increased. While I was nodding to myself, the Silver Lion Earl decided to take another step.

“Wait. If we’re going to do this, then let’s do it with certainty.”

She ripped out a single sheet of paper, scribbled something down on it, and stamped it with the seal attached to the ring that was on the middle finger of her right hand.

“This is a certificate which declares that you’re under my protection. If you have this with you when you run wild, then you should be able to go even wilder. So…….”

I was also able to take a step forward.

“Something.” I only received the pouch from her. “I’d prefer something that’s easier to identify.”

“Huu?”

“Something that’ll make people know at a single glance that I’m favored by you.”

A silence flowed by for a moment.

The Silver Lion Earl, opened her mouth after that moment had gone by.

“Did something happen?”

It seems that her guard had gone up. Nevertheless, that was a step that I could take because I already had an excuse ready.

For starters, denial.

“Nothing in particular happened.”

“No, something did happen. You obviously know what I’ll do if you make that kind of request. For a person who has constantly denied being a masochist, an incident of a proportionate scale must have occurred for your M instincts to have awakened. What happened? Do you want me to ask you for the third time?”

It was then that I bowed my head and answered her.

“Sophna told me that I was only able to survive until now because I was lucky. She said that if I’m even slightly careless, then I’ll be the 108th.”

Instead of adding my own thoughts to it, I only told her what had been said exactly.

The Silver Lion Earl put her hand on her forehead. Another

somewhat lengthy silence.

“Damn grandma.”

She turned to look at me with a sigh.

“Yujin, please understand. Sophna is——a bit, senile. You know well how old people are like since you lived in Korea, right?”

I only listened. Even the act of nodding my head could be interpreted as a rash agreement.

The Silver Lion Earl shrugged.

“In any case, so you’re saying that you’ve become antsy. You need proof that’s decent enough to soothe that restlessness of yours and also help you regain your mental stability. Hm. All right. I get it. Wait A Minute.”

The Silver Lion Earl got up from her seat. She grabbed a lamp that was hanging on the wall, placed it on her desk, and removed the lid. She stared at the flames for a while before putting her hand inside of the lamp.

The flame was unable to harm the Silver Lion Earl at all.

It wasn’t even able to burn the sleeve of her coat.

But——it heated her rings.

“You brought this upon yourself, okay?”

“.....I know.”

“Let’s confirm it.”

I was about to nod my head, but I ended up gulping instead.

The Silver Lion Earl took her hand out once roughly 3 minutes had passed. The rings that were heated in the flame were creating a haze.

Each time she moved her small and slender fingers, the air around them wriggled like the flesh of a prisoner's tortured body. Although it was brilliant and sensual, it was also terrifying.

“Stand up.”

I did as I was told and stood up.

“Come here.”

I approached her.

“Loosen your tie.”

I did so.

“Your collarbone.”

I revealed it.

“Here I go.”

The Silver Lion Earl brought her hand close.

Sszzzzzzzzzzt.....!

“Heuk.....!”

A noise that sounded as if some molten metal had splashed onto a surface. What actually occurred must have been similar to that as well. The area of the skin where the seal of the ring touched didn't get cooked or become burned. It didn't swell up either.

It melted, viscously, like caramel.

“Ah, u.....!”

I thought that I had become accustomed to pain. In reality, that was the case.

“A-Ah……!”

However, even I couldn't withstand it as my hands that were holding the collar of my shirt open started to tremble.

“This is troubling. You're wriggling too much. It'll mess up, you know? This is supposed to be proof of the favor you're receiving, so it needs to be engraved properly. That way it'll be pleasing to look at. If it's like that, then wouldn't other people also come to understand that this was done because you're really adored by me?”

“I k-know……!”

“I know, my butt. Are you a squid? If you twist your body like that even though you're not on top of a grill, hm, aha, yup, that's right. You're doing good. You're a man. It'll be sad if you don't display your spirit and resolve here. Like that. Stay still, like that. Yup, don't move…… good boy. Good boy, Mr. Yujin. You're doing good…….”

The ring was removed from the surface of my skin once an amount of time that felt like an eternity had passed, and on that spot where the ring had been touching, there was a clear ring mark that appeared as if it would never fade away even if an eternity were to pass.

“You did well.”

The Silver Lion Earl put her hand back inside of the lamp.

“Now there's 9 left.”

The Silver Lion Earl didn't hurry. She took as much time as she wanted as she seared her official seals onto me. Even though I occasionally caved in under the pain and my body writhed several times, she was still able to accurately sear the seals of her rings onto me. During this process, I had to take it all in while I revealed my chest on my own accord. Although I had broken out in a cold sweat, trembled, and let out groans of pain, I was just barely able to endure it all.

Eventually, once the 'bestowment' had ended, I wound up falling to my knees as I had become completely exhausted. My clothes were soaked with so much of my sweat that you could probably wring the sweat out.

Just panting hurt. Each time I breathed, my rising and falling chest ached. The air that touched my skin hurt to a ridiculous degree.

The tears that had flowed out involuntarily due to the overwhelming pain went down my cheeks and soaked the seals.

"Mm."

The Silver Lion Earl smacked her lips and hugged me. She licked my tear-drenched cheek haphazardly.

"Mhm! You did well. Ah hah ha, mhm, yup, you did good! Mr. Yujin, ah, Mr. Yujin. So cute. You're really adorable."

"I'm not..... adorable."

"No. You are. It's at a point that I want to embrace you right here and now. If Mr. Yujin weren't a eunuch, then I probably would have done so."

Pat pat, after patting my back audibly, the Silver Lion Earl took out a bottle of magical medicine and rubbed its contents on top of where I was branded. She then started to move her hands skillfully in order to button up my shirt. As the dying skin around the brandings began to heal, it was concealed by my shirt at the same time.

The Silver Lion Earl touched the band of my shirt with lingering fingers before tapping my cheek.

"Have a nice trip."

I turned my head and kissed the back of her hand.

Although there was some residual heat, it wasn't enough to burn

my lips.



Once I returned to my room, the usual members were waiting for me.

“.....Yujin? Your complexion is bad. Did something happen?”

It'll probably be revealed no matter how much I try to hide it.

“The Silver Lion Earl branded me.”

“What!? What do you mean!?”

I pulled my collar down a bit. Flames erupted within Sii's eyes.

“That girl.....!”

“It's all right.”

“But......”

I was about to tell her that it was all right once more, but there was no need to do so. Sii had swallowed her own words by herself. She gnashed her teeth, took some deep breaths, and after calming down her red-hot complexion, Sii touched my collarbone with trembling fingers.

“It hurt, didn't it.....?”

......



“Yes, it hurt.”

“Mm, you did well.”

Sii Garno Mikatni said the same words which her half-sister had said but with a completely different tone.

“Mm~~ you did well. You really endured well.”

I closed my eyes for a moment before opening them. I responded to Sii by kissing the tip of her hand and turned to face the others.

“Let’s have a meeting real quick.”

And then another 2 days passed.



The day of my outing had arrived. Ariya spoke.

**“The preparations are complete.”**

Alshi nodded as well.

**“I also packed some more, money. In case you run short.”**

Roroo was the last one to speak.

**“Wan! That money mostly came from me, wan.”**

**“Quiet you. Trying to take the credit even though you, didn’t give a lot.”**

**“I spent a lot of money when I went around greeting people after I became the vice-captain, wan. Well, if you don’t have enough, then I can just go and get some more, wan. The guard exists for that sake.”**

I answered them one by one.

**“Good job. Thanks for taking care of me. Roroa, I’ll hold off on your suggestion. This isn’t a good time to pick a fight. What happened to your aspiration to protect the public order of the city by taking hold of the guard?”**

**“You can contribute to economic development by raking in foreign currency. Wan, the foreign currency you earn like that will flow to the bottom and stimulate the economy, wan. For someone who came from a world where economics has developed that much, do you not know the fundamentals of consumer theory, wan?”**

**“I understand that you want to joke around, but I don’t have the leisure to play along when my chest is in this state. Let’s keep things moderate. If you’re all ready, then I’m going to get changed.”**

Shortly after, I spoke once more.

**“I’m going to get changed.”**

Roroa flapped her ears.

**“So what, wan?”**

Ariya bowed her head at a 31.83 degrees angle.

**“I’ll be at your side in order to assist you, Fair Grace.”**

Alshi had an incomprehensible smile on her face.

**“I heard that you filmed me getting changed several times,**

**with that so-called hidden camera of yours.”**

I decided to just get changed anyway. Even my underwear. I didn't offer them the kindness of turning around either. Roroa gave the comment 'Different from Ahyeon', while Alshi commented 'Lacks muscles'. Although I felt sorry for Ariya, whose head had burst into smoke after she was unable to figure out where to put her eyes, I definitely gave her the opportunity to look away.

Once I finished getting dressed, I turned back to Sii.

**“Then I'll be going.”**

Sii spoke with a stiff face.

**“Have a safe trip. ....I'll do my part well.”**

**“Don't do the impossible. Alshi, you as well.”**

**“Don't worry. I'll keep a good watch over her.”**

Like that, after leaving Sii and Alshi behind, I left the room with Roroa and Ariya. Ariya, who was finally able to compose herself while we were walking through the hallway, made a troubled expression.

**“Will they be all right?”**

**“Are you worried?”**

**“Yes, a bit. As I thought, wouldn't it be better if I stayed behind instead of Alshi.....?”**

**“No. You're the eye that Sophna had attached to me. If someone is going to be at my side, then it has to be you. Even if it's ineffective, you have to keep acting as a spy. I told you about this back then, didn't I?”**

**“Yes, Fair Grace. You told me.....”**

**“Trust in Sii and your lover. They’ll both do a good job.”**

Ariya nodded her head hesitantly. Roroa flapped her ears as she stretched.

**“Wan. Everyone’s all making a fuss worrying about each other, wan. How will a person without a partner live due to their loneliness?”**

Ariya raised her brows sharply at a 45 degrees angle.

**“Do it with Kina. Like a dog.”**

In response to this spiteful remark which was both racist and making fun of her family, Roroa let out an ‘Oho!’.

**“Do you want to see what’s really like a dog? Wan. Should I go into my unsheathed state and exchange fists with you?”**

**“How disgusting and crude. How could someone like you be the vice-captain of the guard…….”**

**“Likewise. If my superior in the past had a sharp eye for learning things, then he would probably still be around. Wan. Was the last name of that superior who was only good at drinking alcohol Orgit? Not only was his presence lacking because he was overshadowed by the Twelve Bullets, but he died so absurdly that I don’t remember him that well, wan.”**

Ariya glared at Roroa. Roroa bared her canines as she flapped her ears.

The instant Ariya raised one of her fists and Roroa took a step back as she got ready to enter her unsheathed state, I spoke up.

**“Rather than Sii and Alshi, I feel like we should be more worried about us.”**

Ariya’s face became red. Roroa’s expression remained the same, but

I wasn't expecting that sort of self-reflection from her anyway.

**“Ariya, you already learned this before, didn't you? Making fun of someone else's family will only call upon them to make fun of your family in return. Moreover, Roroa, didn't you say you were 31 years old? Are you going to behave like that with a 17-year-old?”**

**“It's a bit weird hearing that from a 19-year-old. Even more so if you consider the fact that that 19-year-old mainly licks the feet of two 16-year-old sisters.”**

**“The taste is different.”**

**“.....Wan?”**

**“In any case.”** I adjusted my glasses. **“Regulate yourselves. This is my first outing, so let's enjoy ourselves a bit. This is an order.”**

Ariya and Roroa both looked up at me with complex expressions on their faces. This was also the reaction that I was aiming for. The reason I said that nonsense a second ago was to not only stop Roroa's ridicule but to also make the two of them feel the same way and strengthen their mutual sense of solidarity.

**“Fair Grace, you occasionally say some..... creepy things.”**

**“Wan, yeah. How did you become such a pervert at your age, wan?”**

I'll have to put up with this misunderstanding.

**“Stop talking nonsense and let's go outside.”**

**“Are you blocking all protest since you have nothing to say, wan? Though that's quite the advisable response, in any case, as we discussed during the meeting, will we be going to the arena first, wan?”**

**“Yeah. Let’s go meet Zia and Yudia.”**

I answered her like that.

## Translator's Notes

1. [1] This may be a bit confusing, but they're basically quoting lines from the book, which are in English, and translating them to Korean the line after.
2. [1] "Silly-hm pher" is basically the Korean direct translation of "Tsundere". Someone who says 'hm ph!' a lot and acts silly/coy.





Eun Minseon was a girl who had both blinding talent and a stunning appearance. She was born in a household that had been wealthy for generations and, as expected, her parents were also renowned for being talented in their own respective fields of work. It wasn't strange for her to have received the nickname 'Young Princess'. You couldn't say that it would be weird for this young princess to grow up into a princess and eventually become a queen.

Of all people, Joo Chanmi was standing in front of that young princess.

There was a goddess who didn't even consider a decent life of going to a first-class university which everyone yearns for and entering a foreign-affiliated business to be as significant as a pebble on the road. Because that person's back was in an unreachable place and clearly existed within her line of sight no matter how much she tried to ignore it, the young princess started to feel as if her own tiara was just a piece of junk.

Stars that witness the sun were destined to realize how poor their glows were.

People like Joo Chanmi didn't forgive anyone who tried to bare their fangs at them. Eun Minseon wasn't oblivious to this fact. She most likely didn't go against Chanmi because she was aware of this. However, like clothes that had been wrinkled, that emotion undoubtedly remained within her heart at all times.

An ember that burned in a small but steady and silent form. The young princess had called out to me a couple of days after I was whipped by the girl who used to sit behind me.

I shall help you.

As she began to talk as if she were bestowing upon me a gift, she continued. Han Yujin, I know that you are being bullied. It must be excruciating. It must be painful. You most likely have nowhere to complain to and wish to simply die. I know. I understand your feelings.

She then declared.

Die!

After saying that without any hesitation whatsoever, she crossed her legs and sat down. The summer rays pierced through the dust-covered windows and created a bizarre atmosphere.

Die. End your life. That is all you have to do. Then things will be blown out of proportion. No one will be able to cover things up anymore. An infirm person's life has that much value. Of course, you are currently an insect. You are not a human. But do not worry. I am here.

I will avenge you.

Your heart feels as if it is burning up, right? Are you not roused due to your burning desire for vengeance? Die. I will carry out your desire.

All you have to do is die. Only then will I be able to make you into a human.

I will do this for your sake.



The Water Dragon City could be largely divided into 8 sections. The northeast section was an area that could be referred to as a special tourist zone. With the arena acting as the main attraction, there were various facilities meant for entertainment located in this section.

Within the waiting room of that very arena, Zia welcomed me with a surprised expression on her face.

**“Yujin. What is the occasion? For you to be outside of the castle, did Her Excellency the Earl allow you to go out?”**

**“That is so, Dame Zia. The magnanimous Her Excellency the Earl had accepted my request to see the city which she rules.”**

**“Is that so. That is a relief. So is that why you had come here right away, Yujin?”**

**“Yes. Although I also wanted to visit the kiosks on the street in front of the castle and the industrial district, there will most likely be another opportunity to do so. Dame Zia, Her Excellency the Earl’s Royal Knight and my sword, I simply could not suppress my desire to see you.”**

**“I am grateful.”**

**“It is I who must be grateful. In any case, Dame Zia, may I say something?”**

**“Please, go ahead. I shall listen attentively with the intention to accept the thirteenth<sup>[\[1\]](#)</sup>.”**

**“Let’s stop talking like this and just use Korean.”**

**“All right. What brings you here?”**

**“I thought I might as well visit the arena since I was already outside. Have you been doing well? It’s really hard to see your face.”**

Zia smiled bitterly.

“I’ve been busy.”

I glanced at the desk. There was a BL manga being propped open and a sheet of paper next to it with a drawing that looked like it was copying the composition of the manga.

“I’m resting right now because I was able to get some time off. But I really was busy. My teacher always stays here around this time of the year, so dozens of challengers come here every day. I’ve been either cleaning up the corpses or fighting against the people who choose not to fight to the death.”

“You didn’t have to give me an excuse. At any rate, it’s a relief since it seems you’ve been doing well.”

Zia smiled bitterly again.

Shortly after, she looked at me quizzically.

“Did you come here just to say that?”

“Yeah.” I adjusted the collar of my shirt slightly and averted my gaze. “See your face a bit……and stuff.”

“This isn’t like you. Did something happen?”

“Not really. **More than that, you should greet these two as well. I’ve been in their care a lot as well.**”

Roroa and Ariya both bowed their heads politely.

**“Wan, hello.”**

**“Hello, Miss Zia.”**

Zia bowed her head respectfully as well.

**“It’s a pleasure, Roroa. And Ariya. Are you two currently**

**accompanying Yujin?”**

**“Wan! That’s right. I’m also patrolling at the same time, wan.”**

**“I’m doing my very best to assist Fair Grace.”**

Zia opened her hand and smiled as she pressed down on my head.

**“I’ll be leaving him in your care. As Yujin was gifted with a virtuous disposition, he is also my dear friend.”**

Roroa and Ariya didn’t make expressions that appeared as if they were saying that that virtuous disposition was dead. Roroa smiled brightly while Ariya nodded sternly. Zia’s expression became softer.

.....

“Zia, it hurts, so can you stop?”

“Your feelings?”

“Physically. I feel like my head will get shoved into my body if you press down any more than that.”

Zia removed her hand with an embarrassed look on her face. I fixed my hair and readjusted my glasses.

“I did come here to give you my regards, but I came here to do something else as well. Can you guide me to your teacher?”

“Mm, that’s not a difficult task, but my teacher is currently facing a challenger. You might end up seeing something horrible, but is that okay?”

“It’s fine. I have to live in this world for a while anyway.”

“.....All right. Follow me.”



Arenas, soccer fields, and theatres all have the same goals. To make the contents that are displayed within the confines of their walls enjoyable to as many people as possible. Thus it was obvious that these sorts of places would have similar structures.

In other words, the arena in this world was similar to the ones back on Earth. There was a stage in the center and spectator seats were forming a full 360-degree circle around it.

A man walked onto that stage.

He was a young man with red, majestic hair that reached all the way down to his waist. I could see that his green eyes with gold cracks etched in them were filled with determination.

**“My name is Shaben Cartet, 26th generation disciple of the Oceanic Spear Arts!”**

His voice cut through the sunlight and resonated throughout the clear sky.

**“Exactly 23 years ago! My ancestor, ‘Wave Spear’ Assel, had fallen in battle against you! However, right now! I shall challenge you! And avenge that loss!”**

He held up his spear and pointed it at Yudia.

**“I challenge you, Royal Courier of the Martial Origin, Yudia Batsand!”**

Yudia, who was standing on the opposite side of the stage, let out his unique ‘Guhuhu’ laugh and embraced his own shoulders.

**“23 years, was it? Has it already been that long? Will you be fighting to the death?”**

**“Of course!”**

**“Then come. I shall concede the first attack to you.”**

**“I’ll take that offer!”**

Shaben shot forward. The dirt on the ground scattered and Shaben’s spear, which was rising up into the sky, swayed around in a complex manner as it aimed at Yudia, making it resemble a venomous snake.

Yudia took a single step forward. His hand was dyed in a purple glow before shifting into the shape of an arrowhead.

In the next instant, it was fired.

The violet arrow ripped through the air and penetrated Shaben’s face. Bang……! As if he had been punched in the face by a giant’s fist, Shaben’s head was torn off.

Shaben’s body came to a stop and kneeled before Yudia. His head was sent flying even further and ended up bursting into pieces the instant it came in contact with the wall of the arena.

**“Next!”**

Yudia spoke.

A man with wings stepped forward. He had wings, but it wasn’t the same type of wings the angel in the torture room had. The angel’s wings consisted of feathers, but this man had leather wings. More than anything else, he was large. He was nearly 3 meters tall. His large physique looked like a fortress that had used muscles for bricks.

**“Third heir of the Mordent Arts, Grakan Mor! I’d like to request a bout!”**

**“Fight to the death?”**

Grakan Mor snorted.

**“A normal duel!”**

**“Hm. What a waste of a large body. Well, all right. Come.”**

Grakan Mor took out a weapon that looked like a bow. It was probably a bow.

It was a strong bow.

The arrow that had left the string reached Yudia before sound itself could. Thuck……! Yudia’s left shoulder burst into pieces the instant it was hit.

Grakan Mor began to fire a barrage of arrows. He wasn’t firing them while on the ground, but by flapping his wings and lifting his body slightly into the air, he pulled the string of his bow by using the momentum of his entire body. Arrows that were flying at speeds that couldn’t be understood with the laws of physics rained down on Yudia. Thuck……! Thuuck……! In a flash, Yudia’s body was covered in fist-sized holes.

Despite having become like that, Yudia continued to slowly walk forward. He was acting as if there was no need for him to rush and that was probably true. The parts of his body that were injured by the arrows changed into a purple liquid before slowly restoring itself. It looked as if his entire body was a swamp.

Grakan Mor beat his wings powerfully and flew up into the sky the instant Yudia got fairly close to him. Yudia raised his spear and aimed it at Grakan Mor before throwing it at him. Grakan Mor attempted to intercept the spear by firing an arrow at it. The arrow, which traveled faster than the speed of sound, impacted right on the tip of the soaring spear.

And melted.

The spear completely erased the arrow and penetrated Grakan



Mor's shoulder.

**“Guah……!!”**

The large archer started to fall head first towards the ground. Since he was at a height that could easily break his neck if he were to fall straight down, I heard some people let out a gasp.

Yudia's body turned into a blob of violet liquid before stretching out into the shape of a circle and receiving Grakan Mor's body like a large cushion. Grakan Mor's body convulsed for a while before he eventually stopped moving.

**“You were paralyzed. You will not die.”**

Yudia returned his body back to normal and picked up his spear.

**“Next!”**

Yudia spoke. A group of two young men and a girl that were gathered on the other side of the stage walked forward. They were a group that had unified their appearance by wearing matching, light purple uniforms and braiding their hair to the right. They were holding peculiar-looking dual blades with scythes attached to the ends of their blades.

**“Amethyst Silver Group, 37th generation disciple, ‘Flashing Executioner Blade’ Oren Garun.”**

**“Amethyst Silver Group, 37th generation disciple, Kartan Garun Hazaren.”**

**“Amethyst Silver Group, 38th generation disciple, Harma Garun Ascenbase…… At the same time, I am also the possessor of the 2nd verse license of Orange Flame Master Vein who is affiliated with the 8th branch of the Mage Tower…….”**

Yudia whistled.

**“Will this be a duel to the death?”**

Oren Garun closed his eyes for a moment before opening them.

**“A duel to the death for me. A normal duel for Kartan and Harma.”**

**“Brother!”**

Kartan shouted but Oren grinned at him.

**“We have to avenge our deceased master and carry on his legacy, right? Wouldn’t it be hard for Harma to do it on her own?”**

**“Then it would be better if I fought to the death! Aren’t you more talented, brother!?”**

**“That’s why I have to fight.”**

**“But…….”**

**“It’s fine. Let’s begin.”**

Oren immediately dashed forward from his position. He was in a weird posture with his back lowered that looked as if he were mopping the floor. Kartan swore out loud and followed after him. Instead of following after them, Harma took a step back and shouted as she crossed her two blades, which were supposedly called executioner blades, in a complex manner.

**“Blazing fire, straight!”**

Empty space shattered and a ray of orange flames extended in a straight line. Yudia gripped the shaft of his spear and spun it around in front of him, forming a circular barricade. The orange ray of fire collided with his spear and vanished.

Oren arrived in front of Yudia in that moment. A white glow gathered around the top portions of his executioner blades. It was the

same type of light that Zia had control over, a transcending skill.

The blazing flashes intersected and left behind ruptures in the air.

Yudia backed away and avoided that attack. Kartan, who was following behind Oren, shot forward with executioner swords that also had white glows wrapped around them. Yudia dodged that as well. Whether it was because they were more proficient at it than Zia or there was a difference in the way they utilized it, but Oren and Kartan closed in on Yudia while using their skills in rotation with shorter cooldown times. Adding Harma's unhindered magic support to the mix, Yudia appeared to be at his wit's end.

That wasn't the case.

The retreating Yudia had at some point switched up his steps and penetrated Oren's abdomen with his hand. Splat.....! Oren's intestines, bones, and flesh burst out from the hole that had formed on his back.

Kartan shouted as if he were screaming.

**“Brother!!”**

Oren coughed up blood.

His body then started to melt.

He looked like a sandcastle that was falling apart. Starting from the area where he had been pierced through, a pitch-back aura spread throughout Oren's entire body and began to liquefy him. Once even his bones dissolved into a lye-like matter and flowed down, the once high-spirited man suddenly became nothing more than an unsightly puddle of chunky liquid.

Kartan cried out as if he were vomiting blood.

**“A duel to the death!!”**

Yudia laughed as if he had been waiting for this.

**“Very well then.”**

Yudia’s body transformed into a violet-colored liquid. Kartan roared angrily as he swung his swords at Yudia who had spread his body out like a curtain. His weapons were wrapped in a white glow, but Yudia split his body in half as if he had predicted the trajectory of Kartan’s attack. Kartan’s executioner swords slashed through empty space and Kartan wound up diving into the violet, stretched out curtains.

The curtains closed.

**“Huaaaak……!!”**

A horrible scream resonated.

The outline of Kartan’s body could be seen outside the violet curtains. He was struggling. He was flailing his limbs. He was even floundering. Each time he did so, the volume of his outline gradually grew smaller. It was almost as fast as a shaving knife scraping out some butter.

Eventually, his final death throes came to an end and Yudia returned back to his human form. At his feet, a brown liquid flowed out from the soles of his shoes and formed a round puddle underneath him. Yudia splashed about in the puddle like a child playing around in a puddle of mud and raised his head with a grin.

**“Do you wish to continue?”**

Harma’s mouth was slightly agape…… she then looked down at the remains of her comrades…… and she eventually gritted her teeth.

**“10 years later.”**

Yudia smiled brightly.

**“10 years from now. Amethyst Silver Group, 38th**

**generation disciple, Harma Garun Ascenbase. I will not forget.”**

Harma walked forward and collected the corpses. Yudia tied his spear to his back and turned around.

**“Next.”**

Yudia Batsand spoke.

It was like that. Yudia continued to take on challenger after challenger. The battles consisted of normal duels and duels to the death, but every single person who requested a duel to the death ended up meeting a terrible fate without any exception whatsoever.

I, who had witnessed those dreadful sights, had to do a SAN check. I must have been able to successfully ready myself after listening to Zia’s warning because I was able to pass the check.

**“Ah, Yujin. It’s nice to meet you.”**

Yudia, who had just finished carrying out what appeared to be more of a slaughter rather than a bunch of match-ups, waved his hand at me with a welcoming face. I returned his wave and turned to Zia.

“This isn’t against the law?”

“I know, right……? Isn’t it truly terrifying, Yujin?”

Seeing as how I had chosen the wrong person to ask that question to, it seems I actually failed that SAN check earlier.

**“Roroa, does this not go against any laws?”**

**“Wan! These are proper duels where both parties have consented. There aren’t any legal issues in duels to the death if both parties have agreed to them, wan.”**

**“So duels are acknowledged.”**

**“To be more exact, it depends on the territory laws, wan. The Silver Lion Palatinate doesn’t have a criminal agreement with other territories. Moreover, all of these people are not a part of the Silver Lion Palatinate, wan. Therefore, as long as they do not cause any direct harm to the people of this city, these matches follow the world laws, and according to those laws, mutually consenting duels are allowed, wan.”**

Now that I think about it, back during the Fedchant incident, I think I heard something along the lines of ‘They’re outsiders according to the world laws, so I can’t sentence them to jail’. Let’s keep this in mind.

At any rate, Yudia pushed up his monocle and walked towards me.

**“I did not expect to see you outside of the castle. Did you come here to see me? I thought that you had piled up a lot of hatred.”**

**“Of course not. All you did was follow the Earl’s order. I don’t feel anything towards you.”**

**“A lie, I see.”**

It was obviously a lie.

Yudia laughed with his unique ‘guhuhu’.

**“So, what brings you here? I heard that you have not been on good terms with Yellow-Green Grass lately. Are you here to get my advice in regard to that?”**

Mm.

These words were——something I should keep a mental note of.

**“I’ll be handling that on my own. Can we talk with just the two of us for a moment?”**

My request must have been unexpected as Yudia raised a single brow. The others as well, starting from Zia, they were all surprised.

I bowed my head to the others and asked for their understanding as I brought Yudia to another side of the arena. Once I confirmed that we were out of earshot, I spoke.

**“You said that you were looking for a disciple, right?”**

Yudia appeared genuinely surprised now.

**“I did, but why do you ask?”**

**“I was wondering if you perhaps took recommendations.”**

**“Hoh.”**

A smile appeared on Yudia’s lips. His smile felt like the haze that would emanate from boiling sulfur. Yudia rubbed his chin as he glanced around at the people I had brought with me before stopping his gaze at Roroa.

**“Expired. A broken gemstone. In multiple meanings, a missed opportunity. Even if I were to take her under my wing now, her sense of identity is too strong. Worst of all, she is most likely incapable of suppressing her instinct of self-preservation. Something like when that maid, whom I had severed the arm of, had suppressed her hatred with her fear. This seems to be a characteristic which she was born with, but in any case, she does not match well with me. She will simply become a failure worse than Zia.”**

Next was Ariya.

**“Her build is not bad. She is also talented. However, her will is weak. This seems to also be a part of this girl’s nature. Hm. Although she will probably be able to reach Zia’s level with ease, she will be incapable of reaching a peak higher than that due to a similar problem which Zia has. That is it.”**

Finally, it was me.

**“If I were to pick someone here, then it would be you.”**

**“There’s no one further away from hatred than me.”**

**“Embers hide within ashes.”**

.....,

**“I’m bad at working out as well.”**

**“Kuk. Detestably, that seems to be the truth. No matter how impressive your sneak attacks may be, if there is a martial artist who is taken down by you, then that sort of piece of trash must naturally despise itself.”**

This guy really dislikes Zia, doesn’t he?

In any case, I shook my head.

**“In summary. You’re not interested in anyone.”**

**“Yes. Well, it was a good attempt. However——.”**

I raised my hand and stopped Yudia mid-sentence. Yudia blinked and looked at me.

**“Yudia.”**

And then.

**“Do you want to make a bet with me?”**

I spoke the words that were similar to what I had once said to his disciple.

Yudia folded his arms.

**“What sort of bet?”**



**“If I succeed in conquering the Silver Lion Castle within this month, then you have to accept the people who I recommend as your disciples.”**

There was a moment of silence.

I added one more thing.

**“Taking them in as your disciple for only a short period of time is fine as well.”**

Yudia shook his head immediately.

**“No, that is fine. Detestably, 50 years have already passed since I no longer had to explain to other people about what I do. It does not matter who I take in as a disciple, why I take them in, or for how long. These things are simply nuisances that I can easily handle on my own. So that is fine, but, hmm ———conquer, was it? Do you understand what sort of situation you are in right now?”**

**“I know.”**

**“Aha, you most likely do. That is why you had added the condition ‘within this month’. If that is the case, then this is referring to what happens after……. How interesting.”**

Yudia rubbed his chin and tapped his lips.

**“Interesting.”**

Eventually, he nodded. Guhuhuhu, he let out his unique laugh and looked up at me with a pleased expression on his face, in other words, an expression that looked like he was looking down at the child of his mortal enemy who was flailing their limbs as they suffocated to death in a swamp.

**“All right———I accept that bet. However, only one person.”**

**“Don’t kill or break them on purpose.”**

**“Tsk, very well. If you lose, then I will be taking your iPhone, iPad, and your generator. Is that all right?”**

**“Yup.”**

**“Good. Was that all you wished to discuss with me?”**

**“There’s one more thing I wanted to confirm.”**

**“What is it?”**

I gripped the beads that were inside my pocket tightly.

**“Were you the one who killed them? The two Gongshik members that had entered the city.”**

**“Yes.”**

Yudia Batsand answered in a bafflingly candid manner.

He then asked back.

**“How did you figure that out?”**

In response to that question which he had asked purely to alleviate his curiosity, I answered after rolling a single bead.

**“Because no one knows who did it.”**

I explained.

**“The city guard are clueless and the Black Dragon Street don’t know who did it either. There isn’t a single person who knows. Not even the tiniest bit of information about this incident was leaked from the side that had committed this act. This implies two things: First, the person who had done this was skilled enough to kill them in an instant without leaving even a single trace of the fight behind. Second, it was**

**a single person and not a group. Roroa gave me the information of everyone in the Water Dragon City and I went through it, but you're the only one who met both of these conditions."**

**"It is a small city after all. I wonder why no one was able to figure it out when it was this simple."**

Of course, some people probably had their suspicions. They just didn't have any definitive proof. Moreover, there was no one brave enough to cast their suspicion on you. It was a trivial issue. I didn't tell him that.

**"Why did you kill them?"**

The response that Yudia gave was to audibly murmur to himself.

**"Mm, it is not particularly related to you."**

**"I know, I'm an otherworlder. But———."**

**"No, that is not the issue. It is sincerely unrelated to both you and the Silver Lion Earl. How should I say it…… I killed them because they simply stuck out. The Gongshik and I have some past ties."**

As my current self, I couldn't understand what sort of ties he could have possibly had that could make him kill two people just because they stuck out. I hoped that my future-self continued to not understand.

Yudia also seemed like he had no intention of going into any further details.

**"Guhuhu, let us leave it at that. Everyone is waiting."**

**"Okay. Thanks for the good conversation."**

**"That is also a lie."**

It was obviously a lie.



30 minutes later, we had left the arena. Roroa stuck right next to me as we walked.

**“Wan. That was an interesting conversation.”**

**“You could hear us?”**

Roroa flapped her ears. Ears. I see. It seems Saber-Fangs had a better sense of hearing than what I originally thought.

This was my short-sightedness.

But at the same time.

**“You didn’t have to tell me that you overheard our conversation.”**

**“You’re right. Wan. But, well, I told you anyway, wan.”**

**“Thanks.”**

**“Hm, you’re being rather docile, wan? You could have just made something up like telling me that you let me eavesdrop on purpose.”**

**“It wasn’t something I wanted to particularly hide from you guys. I only put some distance between us so that Zia couldn’t hear our conversation.”**

Once Ariya heard those words, she came right up to my side as well.

**“What did the two of you discuss?”**

**“I asked him to give me the right to recommend a disciple to him if I’m able to gain control of the castle within this month.”**

Ariya looked panicked.

**“Why did you ask for such a thing……?”**

**“You aren’t interested?”**

Ariya twitched. I gave her a sidelong glance.

**“I know that there’s a problem with your personality. That’s why I added the condition that he can’t kill or injure the person I recommend. The Earl probably added similar conditions when she sent Zia to be his disciple. In any case, he’s one of the strongest people in this world, right? It’s an opportunity to be a disciple of a person like that. Are you not interested?”**

**“For my sake……?”**

**“As long as something major doesn’t happen.”**

The girl from a fallen household of knights looked at me without a word. I noticed this the first time we met, but this girl was the same height as me. The angle of her gaze was also exactly 180 degree.

**“Fair Grace, you truly are a generous and good person.”**

That’s not right.

**“This is nothing more than a tangent. The main point is after that.”**

Roroo flapped her ears.

**“Wan. I did have my suspicions, wan. I didn’t expect him to answer so submissively though.”**

**“It’s probably because I’m the one who asked, which means that he believes I can handle it. Although it’s a little upsetting, it’s most likely the truth.”**

Yudia Batsand. The Royal Courier of the Martial Origin which was one of the twelve factions of the world.

Not only did he have that much power, but he had a decent status and most likely a sizeable wealth as well. He had that much freedom of movement.

Roroo took note of that fact as well.

**“We won’t be able to threaten him or make a trade with him, wan.”**

**“It’ll be meaningless. That’s why I told you. ……Albeit, even if we could trade with him, I wouldn’t carry out a psychological warfare against him.”**

**“Is it because he can’t be controlled, wan?”**

**“Yup. We can’t tell where he’ll run off to. The best option is to not make him an enemy or an ally. If we want to get involved with him, then we have to do so as a third party. Someone he can trade or make bets with.”**

**“Since he’ll play with fire the moment you give him the opportunity to do so?”**

**“You know it well.”**

In a certain meaning, this was most likely also a type of trauma. I adjusted my glasses and turned to look at Roroo.

**“So, the next destination. You’re certain of it, right?”**

**“I’m certain, wan. This won’t be a trip for nothing, wan.”**

**“I trust you.”**

Those were heavy words. As usual, Roroa smiled widely in a way that revealed her canines.

We continued to walk in silence for a while. It must have been in order to change the mood as Ariya spoke up.

**“Did you say that the head of that merchant group was your acquaintance?”**

**“Yes. We have a bit of an ill-fated relationship, wan.”**

Roroa Ara Harte answered as she scratched the back of her head with a modest expression on her face.



The twelve factions of the world all have their own respective intrinsic organizational system.

Using the Martial Origin, the faction which Yudia is the Royal Courier of, as an example, they’re a faction of loosely merged groups. To be more exact, among the several traditional groups that are capable of relying on each other’s shoulders equally, the Martial Origin had simply taken the role as the leader of all of these groups since they’re currently the most prosperous, and they’re occupying one of the twelve seats of the twelve factions of the world because of

this. If one of these traditional groups were to surpass the Martial Origin in terms of prosperity, then they would most likely take the Martial Origin's place in the twelve factions of the world.

〈We are the strongest weapon which humanity can use.〉

It didn't matter whether it was with a spear, a sword, or their fists. They just had to be the strongest weapon which humanity had.

The Black Dragon Street is similar to an organization of loose alliances. With the headquarters in the capital and the branches spread throughout the world as their core, they take the various illegal organizations——they refer to these groups as 'gatherings of ostracized individuals'——that are outside of their faction, under their management. If the headquarters is the head, then the branches form a single lengthy body and the organizations that are affiliated with them are the countless parasites that are attached to the main body.

〈Anyone can be a Black Dragon, and the Black Dragon is everyone.〉

Just like their slogan, the Black Dragon Street continued to receive the darkness of humanity. Occasionally, up-and-coming illegal organizations that refuse to go under their wing, like the Gongshik, would appear, but as long as those groups continued to leave their essence in darkness, their independence would not last for long.

On the other hand, the Mage Tower is a unified organization of absolute allegiance. They have a headquarters and many branches, but they don't manage any smaller organizations. Occasionally, fearless mages would appear and try to create a new magic organization, but they would disappear without a trace faster than the illegal organizations that refuse to go under the Black Dragon Street's wing.

〈A single great staff.〉

The distinct characteristics of each of their branches were very clear, and even within those branches, their distinct characteristics



would become even clearer as they diversified them through their teacher-disciple relationships, however, these things were nothing more than decisions of the staff. Ever since the Mage Tower was first established, their ideology has never changed.

The Fedchant is a slightly peculiar group. Their structure in itself is similar to that of the Black Dragon Street. They have a headquarters, branches, and countless organizations under their wing. On the other hand, the pureness of their headquarters and branches is similar to the Mage Tower. Only the Cat Ears that worshipped Higher God Iyanko Niyaon could obtain the right to become an executive. However, the way they treated the organizations under their wing is similar to the Martial Origin's system. The Fedchant didn't thoughtlessly wave aside smaller organizations just because they weren't under their management.

〈What could you do with the single gold coin that was wasted like that?〉

Doing so meant that they wouldn't be able to make that much money. Although they're indeed scoundrels that eat even the bones if they wish to retrieve their investment, the majority of the time, the Fedchant simply provides benefits that befit the amount of tax paid by the merchant groups that have become one of their members. And among those groups, executives would simply sponsor the groups that catch their eyes.

This was long, but in any case.

The Goldbeard Merchant Group, which had been staying in the Lion Tail Inn of the Water Dragon City since 4 days ago, was obviously a member of the Fedchant, and from that very Fedchant, they were sponsored by one of their branch executives, Lady Dansoomyo.

**“So you're Her Excellency the Earl's lover?”**

The head of the Goldbeard Merchant Group, Rihittle Odeon spoke while touching his golden beard which the name of his merchant

group had originated from.

I opened the paper fan that I had brought from Korea and hid my mouth with it as I smiled with my eyes.

**“Mhm~ I’m here to greet you.”**

Rihittle Odeon had an uncomfortable look on his face. It probably wasn’t because of the fact that I was an otherworlder. It probably wasn’t because of the fact that Ariya was standing behind me respectfully either. If anything, it was probably because he was bothered by the fact that Rorooa was sitting next to me and leaning her body on top of the table and laughing to herself.

**“My name is Rihittle Odeon. You probably heard from the director of the headquarters who had guided you here, but I am acting as the leader of the Goldbeard Merchant Group. Ehem. And, uh, the one over there…… I heard that she had become the vice-captain of the guard.”**

Rorooa flapped her ears joyfully.

**“Wan! That’s right.”**

**“That’s really…… hm. I have no intention of insulting you, so please don’t misunderstand, but considering your race, that’s truly a shocking way to greet someone.”**

**“That’s right, wan! Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl has no interest in a person’s race. She only cares about whether you can do your job properly or not, wan. Isn’t that interesting? Wan! There was a time, long time ago, when I was once a member of an adventurer group, but doesn’t that line seem similar to what the leader at that time had said to me back then, wan?”**

Rihittle Odeon cleared his throat roughly.

With my hand supporting my chin, I smiled.

**“I heard about the relationship between you and Roroo. You were an adventurer a long time ago, right? You found a chunk of gold inside a labyrinth, but the only person you didn’t distribute it to was Roroo. Racial discrimination because she’s a Saber-Fang. You’re rather small-minded for a person who’s grown out such a manly mustache.”**

The face of the man who had formed a merchant group with the chunk of gold he had obtained from his adventuring days, and had succeeded enough to be sponsored by a Fedchant executive, became red.

**“That was a long time ago. Moreover, everyone would treat Saber-Fangs like that back then. I’m digressing, but I had paid the price for that already. Thanks to Vice-captain Roroo over there for having run off to the Black Dragon Street and handing them all of the information there was about my adventurer party, I was hassled to no end. What was it, uh, double jeopardy, was it? Wasn’t there a phrase like that?”**

**“Oh dear. You can’t just use that term like that, wan. The phrase double jeopardy wasn’t made for a purpose like that, wan. Isn’t that so, Yujin?”**

Although it’s detestable, I should agree with her here.

**“Indeed. After hearing about what happened, you were rather harsh. I adore Roroo a fair bit…… you know?”**

I smacked my lips as I crossed my legs. Creases formed on my tight leather shorts and my black tights stuck to my skin. Like so, this was the first time I was genuinely in my bastard mode since I messed around with Mari at the rampart, but it seems I was doing a good job as Rihittle Odeon looked nervous.



**“You came here to do business, didn’t you? But, hmm~ what to do? Aren’t merchants all about trust? Is it possible to trust a merchant group that has a leader who had once betrayed someone’s trust? Should we allow an untrustworthy merchant group to do business in this city? I was just having these sorts of thoughts~.”**

**“Wan! There’s nothing to even see here, Sir Yujin, wan! We should tell them to leave right this instant, wan!”**

Roroo shouted as if she were barking. Rihittle Odeon bit his lip, but he didn’t give a retort.

He most likely couldn’t say something like ‘Does someone like you even have the authority to do something like that?’. This wasn’t because of some ridiculous reason like him feeling guilty because he actually did commit some bad things in the past, but because if he were to retort back at us carelessly and incite malice, then there was the chance that the city guard could come for him.

It was like this back on Earth as well, but a business that would come out clean if you dusted them didn’t exist. People like Rihittle Odeon, who were overflowing with loyalty, were probably as dirty as the filter of a vacuum cleaner that hadn’t been opened for over a year. They couldn’t be imprisoned thoughtlessly, and at the very most, we could only give them a banishment notice since they were a foreign group, but he most likely wanted to avoid receiving that sort of humiliation from the city which their sponsor was going to visit soon.

He may have thought about bringing up the name of that very sponsor of his. ‘Lady Dansoomyo, the cousin of Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl, the lord of this Water Dragon City, is sponsoring me. As Lady Dansoomyo is the esteemed daughter of the House of the Cat Earl, she is also a branch executive of the Fedchant and she…….’ But even that was a difficult choice to make.

Of course, there was the possibility that he didn’t know that Her Excellency the Earl disliked that sponsor of his, but was a banishment

that went according to the world laws really the only thing that Roroo could do? Rihittle Odeon most likely knew about Roroo's personality.

I used this very moment to take the initiative.

**“Although Roroo, who hasn't been vice-captain for long, is saying that..... I'm still thinking about it.”**

With a long stroke, I scratched the surface of the table with the end of my fan and bend my back forward. I did so in a way that allowed the strings of my loosely tied sailor blouse to flow down, revealing the 10 seals that were branded on my collarbone.

**“You know, you've probably realized by now due to the conversation, but Her Excellency doesn't know about this.”**

**“Then that means......”**

Rihittle held his breath. Without any warning, I folded my fan and stroked his beard with it.

**“You aren't smart, are you~? I thought that you would be more quick-witted since you're the head of the Gold Merchant Group~ In summary, Rihittle, this means that whether you're a trustworthy peddler or not depends on my judgment~ How were you able to manage a group of merchants despite not knowing that?”**

A vein popped on Rihittle's forehead. There's no way that he would feel pleased when he was being treated like an idiot by the type of person he didn't want to be treated like an idiot by the most. Nevertheless, instead of voicing his complaints, Rihittle smiled. It was the smile of a partner in crime.

**“In other words, you want money.....?”**

**“Huh? What? Do you think I'm some thief from the Black Dragon Street? How absurd.”**

Once I snapped at him with a grouchy look on my face, he started to panic once more.

**“Ah, m-my apologies. If that’s the case, then…….”**

**“I heard that your merchant group mainly deals in food, right?”**

**“Ah, yes. My mother runs a farm and my younger sibling has his own small boat, so I’m able to obtain fresh products for a reasonable price and distribute them to various places since I have connections with both the Union of Agriculture and Union of the Sea…….”**

The Union of Agriculture and Union of the Sea were both a part of the twelve factions of the world. The Union of Agriculture and the Union of the Sea were both respectively busy maintaining and developing their farmlands and sea routes, so it was the Fedchant’s job to deliver the products from left to right. Rihittle Odeon’s merchant group was one of those groups.

**“Actually, there’s a certain business I want to do. If you guys act as my legs, then I won’t forget that sincerity~.”**

I snapped my fingers casually. Ariya, who had been on standby, took out something that was wrapped up.

**“This is……?”**

Once Rihittle Odeon received the item from her and unwrapped it, he looked surprised.

It was a macaron.

**“It’s pretty.”** It seems to have caught Rihittle Odeon’s attention.  
**“Is it a snack?”**

**“Yup~ It’s a snack I made using my world’s method. Do you want to try it?”**

Instead of doing that, Rihittle Odeon examined the macaron carefully. He stroked his splendid beard as he turned the macaron around and put some strength into his fingers as he squished it slightly. He then grinned slightly and turned to me.

**“There’s no poison, right?”**

**“Yup~ I didn’t add any this time.”**

I answered immediately while smiling brightly. Rihittle Odeon must have just been trying to sound me out as well since he returned to carefully examining the macaron…… Eventually, he put it in his mouth.

**“Mm.”**

Rihittle Odeon released his golden beard.

**“This will sell.”**

**“Right~?”**

**“Yes, the outer appearance is pretty and it tastes good. The texture of it is interesting…… What is it? Did you solidify sugar?”**

**“How hasty.”** I brushed Rihittle Odeon’s beard with my fan. **“In any case, you understand what I want, right?”**

**“You’ll give me the recipe, so give you something of equal value in return……?”**

**“There’s no way that would be the case. Look at this man. I told him to show some sincerity, but he’s trying to monopolize it.”**

Rihittle smiled bitterly. That was most likely a bluff he had blurted out since there was a chance that he would have to pay an exorbitant price if he did anything rash. He probably intended to hear my



concrete demands first so that he could negotiate with me while taking his unfavorable situation into account.

However, I wasn't here to do that.

I stood up from my seat and patted Roroa's head.

**“You can discuss the details with her.”**

Rihittle's expression contorted. Roroa smiled like a dog that had discovered a ball and a kidnapper who had discovered a kid.

**“Wan! Although I don't really want to do this, this is also Sir Yujin's order, wan! Now let's talk.”**

**“Uugh…….”**

**“Do your best. I'll be resting in the room on the side for a bit.”**

I brought Ariya with me and grabbed the door handle. Rihittle panicked.

**“Ah, wait a second. There's someone…….”**

**“Wan! What are you standing up for all of a sudden!?”**

Putting those noises behind me, Ariya and I entered the room on the side.

It was a reception room. A single old man was sitting down and reading a book. I sat in the chair opposite of him. Ariya stood respectfully behind me once more.

There was a moment of silence.

**“What book is that?”**

The old man lifted his head. He looked at me with cold eyes.

**“Do you know me?”**

**“I’ve never seen your face before.”** That was the truth. **“So what book are you reading?”**

There was no need for me to furtively reveal my collarbone while asking him this. The old man furrowed his brow before answering.

**“〈Shadow Erasing〉. A book about the beginning and end of this world. It was written by Touma Soh and was published after being certified by thousands of scholars.”**

**“Heh~ So you’re an intellectual.”**

**“Has no one told you that you’re disrespectful when talking to your elders?”**

**“All the time. Especially recently.”**

**“Your appearance is quite different compared to before.”**

**“Shouldn’t I be the one to say that, Borg Edentras?”**

The old man froze.

The old man who had been glaring at me pulled his hand away from his book and stroked his face. His wrinkles were rubbed off and his beard was removed as well, which then revealed the same sharp facial features and bandit-like appearance that I had previously seen back when this person was summoned in the Lord’s office. As expected of the Black Dragon Street, although I was awed by the art of disguise which befitted the branch manager of a group of thieves, it seems that Borg was actually impressed by me.

**“How did you know?”**

**“I have a competent subordinate.”**

Borg glanced at the door. It was as if he were trying to stare at Roroa through the door. He then clicked his tongue and continued.

**“I see. I was wondering why I was meeting with Goldbeard today, but it seems I was actually called here by that girl. Subordinate, huh? If I were you, then I wouldn’t make a misunderstanding like that. If you don’t want to be devoured all the way down to your bones, then it would be better if you took better care of yourself.”**

If you consider Roroa’s mentality, then it would only be natural for people to think that I was actually the one who was being used. When he noticed my lack of response, Borg chuckled and scratched his beard.

**“Well, it’s not related to me. So you’re saying that your goal wasn’t to meet Goldbeard, but me?”**

**“Both. If I were to go out of my way to point out who’s more important, then that would be you.”**

**“So you’re here to deal with me? You, personally?”**

I nodded.

**“That’s why I came here to deal with you. Personally.”**

I answered him like that.



I crossed my legs as I sat down.

I angled my bottom slightly. I leaned back in a way that made it so that only one of my shoulder blades touched the back of the chair.

While tilting my body in a way that made it seem as if I were supporting my body with only a certain portion of my tailbone, I held my beads with one hand. With Ariya standing behind me, I faced Borg Edentras.

Borg had an amused look on his face.

**“I see you were acting in the office.”**

**“I’m still acting even now.”**

**“Thank you for providing me with the information that you’re not a person who should be trusted.”**

**“I’m giving you a free service. As I said before, you’ll be dealing with me.”**

**“You’re getting a bit full of yourself. Let’s put aside the fact that you’re using that idiot out there. He’s called Goldbeard because he’s fun to pluck things from. But you’re going to deal with me? I don’t know why I have to deal with you.”**

**“Because of this.”**

I took out a pouch of money from my clothes. It was 10,000 vita, half of what the Earl had given me.

Borg furrowed his brow.

**“I see that you’re misunderstanding something because of what happened in the Lord’s office. Do you think that a branch manager of the Black Dragon Street would be this cheap?”**

**“Of course not. I’m aware that you worked at that price because the Earl had summoned you. However, I came to visit you like this after personally asking around. Can’t you put my sincerity into consideration?”**

**“Learn about the procedures of approaching a branch of the Black Dragon Street. Get in contact with us. Come meet me after going through three steps. Show your sincerity throughout all of those steps. That is what you would call devotion.”**

**“How stern…….”**

**“Rules are rules. I’m not sure as to how it is in your world, but if you plan to live here, then you need to get accustomed to this.”**

**“All right. Then let’s end the work-related talk here. I’ll just do that next time.”**

Once I said that while shrugging my shoulders, Borg raised a single brow.

**“You’re backing off rather quickly.”**

**“Because I’m not an idiot who would put effort into something that won’t happen. Let’s just talk.”**

**“I feel like you actually are an idiot. Why should I even talk with you?”**

**“Considering the fact that you’re still sitting down, aren’t you honestly interested?”**

While conversing, I poured a cup of tea with the kettle that was on the table and passed it to him. I gave him a macaron as well.

Borg didn’t receive either of them.

**“I have a habit of not eating stuff given by someone I don’t know. It’s an occupational disease.”**

**“What’s up with that? That occupational disease would make others feel bad. Then you should pour me a cup**

**instead.”**

**“It’s more helpful than you think. From what I can see, it’s an occupational disease which you should also have. Has no one told you that I’m good at handling poisons?”**

**“I know.”** I unwrapped a single piece of candy and tossed it in my mouth. **“But you aren’t an idiot who’d poison me right now, right?”**

Borg laughed. He poured a cup of tea and passed it to me.

I drank it without any hesitation. Borg’s smile thickened.

**“I see that you’ve read a lot of romance novels. Am I supposed to become awed by your courage and knowledge now? Followed by coming to terms with your candid and genuine charm and arriving at a mutual understanding between men.”**

The tea was bitter. I spat out the piece of candy into my cup and I spoke with a twinkle in my eye.

**“Will you?”**

**“Stop dreaming.”**

Borg laughed shamelessly.

**“I am indeed interested in you. Thus, you are correct when you pointed out the fact that that was the reason why I am still sitting here. However, that’s it. I will have an enjoyable private conversation with you and I will leave whenever I want. Simple, isn’t it?”**

**“Fastidious as well.”** I took another gulp of my tea. **“You aren’t popular with the ladies, are you?”**

**“Look who’s talking. I heard that an old lady has been**

**harassing you as of late.”**

I had my suspicions the previous time he was in the castle, but this man was probably receiving information from someone inside the castle. This was an obvious fact and I also knew who it was.

Well, in any case.

**“What about me are you interested in?”**

**“There’s no other choice but to be interested. It has been 4 years since an otherworlder was able to come out alive. Furthermore, that very otherworlder was able to even learn this world’s language. Do you understand how valuable you are?”**

**“So I’m receiving quite the amount of attention, huh?”**

**“That’s right. Word about you should have started to spread outside of the city by now.”**

**“How strainful~ I don’t like being the center of attention.”**

**“That’s questionable. You appear like you’re overflowing with the temperament of an actor.”**

I took another sip of my tea. I started to feel a twinging pain inside of my body.

It’s started.

In other words, now was the time.

**“Yudia Batsand was the one who had killed those Gongshik members.”**

Borg’s face became rigid.

**“What?”**

**“I don’t know why he killed them. Something about having some past ties with them. In any case, Yudia turned them into corpses the instant they entered the city. And the fellows who had received the masks that had come from those corpses went around acting as Gongshik members and assaulted me.”**

**“What are you talking about……?”**

**“I want you to testify that Sophna was the one who had pretended to be a member of Gongshik.”**

Borg’s complexion quickly settled down. It was truly fast.

**“Look here.”**

He chuckled and scratched at his beard.

**“Really. Do you intend to topple that grandma who’s been harassing you? Moreover, you want me to help you with that? The Silver Lion Earl’s otherworlder, is that what you’re saying right now?”**

I rolled a bead.

**“What if I am?”**

**“What if you are? What do you mean, ‘what’? There’s no way that the Earl would want something like that. Therefore, you’re doing this arbitrarily, and if that’s the case, then you’re a pup that’s trying to bite your own owner.”**

Borg leaned his head back and looked behind me.

**“Even the Orgit girl is just standing there and listening to this in silence. I had my guesses when I heard that you were caught stealing, but it seems your household has really thrown away their pride. Bite off all Twelve Fingers.”**



Ariya bit her lips. I raised my hand and calmed her down before speaking.

**“I heard that you value loyalty highly.”**

**“You heard? Yeah, you know because you heard about it. How could you not know? This is truly making me think back to the time when I was 14-years-old. Once I obtained a title and became the head of a branch, I believed that everything was going my way. But did you know? I ended up seeing blood because I messed around like that. If you…….”**

My insides hurt.

**“That’s a tendency that appears in my world as well.”**

**“What?”**

**“You clearly started to work for an underground group because you were unable to uphold the rules of society, and yet you’re obsessed with things like ‘uphold the things that can be upheld’ and ‘loyalty and devotion’.”**

**“This son of a bitch.”**

Borg chuckled. He tilted his head and looked at me as if he were glancing at something pitiable.

**“You’re trying to provoke me?”**

**“I’m only speaking the truth.”**

**“What do you mean by ‘the truth’? You’re just speaking bullshit with that unripened mouth of yours. Yeah, as you said, there are some sons of bitches. The Black Dragon Street is a crucible where those sorts of unique sons of bitches gather. But even the Black Dragon Street isn’t hostile towards humanity itself. Why do you think that’s the case?”**

I kept my mouth shut. Borg stayed silent for a moment before continuing.

**“The Black Dragon Street exists for the sake of humanity.”**

The tone of his voice was serious.

**“If the headquarters of the Black Dragon Street is the head, then the branches are its long body. If the smaller organizations are the numerous parasites that are attached to that body, then humanity is the mass which the dragon is wrapped around. Anyone can be a Black Dragon, and the Black Dragon is everyone. The Black Dragon Street accepts those who are not accepted anywhere in the world as their foundation, and thanks to this, the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches is able to stay together while the Black Dragon Street does whatever they can to tread through this cruel world, but the foundation of the Black Dragon Street is still within humanity itself.”**

Borg closed his eyes and opened them.

**“Only crazy people would set the foundation which they reside in on fire.”**

The manager of the Water Dragon City’s Black Dragon Street branch declared firmly.

**“Even Black Dragons have to have that much self-awareness. That is the minimum requirement.”**

Borg Edentras looked at me with a cold face.

**“So what do you think I’m going to do starting now? You son of a bitch. I’m going to contact the Earl immediately and tell her everything I heard just now. Then things will proceed quite interestingly. As a matter of fact, ever since that prickly dog became the vice-captain, I’ve been contemplating on how to deal with her, but thanks to you, it seems I’ll be able to**

**deal with my problems all at once.”**

**“You won’t be able to tell the Earl.”**

**“Why does the genius think that?”**

**“Of course, because you had joined hands with the Mage Tower in order to make the Earl fall into a trap back then during the Fedchant incident.”**

Silence.

**“How,”** A very short silence. **“All right——Sure. So there was a reason why you were confident. In other words, you’re saying that you’ll grab me by the neck? You’re going to threaten me!? Hah! With something like that…….”**

Borg was forced to stop in the middle of his sentence because of the abrupt gush of blood that came from my mouth.

My throat suddenly became hot and an uncontrollable lump surged upwards. The blood, which was overflowing like a clogged toilet, poured down on the table like a waterfall.

A bit of the spilled blood splashed onto Borg’s face.

**“Fair Grace……!”**

Ariya supported my body. After I raised my hand and thanked her since I was able to avoid collapsing onto the table due to her support, I continued speaking.

**“Yes…… that most likely isn’t enough.”**

I knew.

I had prepared even this because I knew.

**“What are you…….”**

Borg was panicking. He wasn't able to recompose himself quickly this time.

I spoke before he could do so.

**“It's scorpion poison from a groundspider.”**

A drop of blood flowed down from my chin and dripped down onto the table.

It felt as if my esophagus and respiratory tract were being torn out every time I breathed.

**“It's a slow-releasing poison..... it's similar to your signature poison, isn't it?”**

**“That,”** Borg shot up from his seat. **“Where did you get.....”**

Previously.

Around the time when Roroa was still concealing her true nature, instead of telling him about the piece of candy that she had given to us, I coughed up more blood.

**“I wonder. That isn't important..... What's important is the fact that I drank the tea which you had poured, and for some reason, I was poisoned by something that's similar to your signature poison.....”**

**“I didn't.....!”**

**“Of course, you..... could defend yourself like that..... but the Earl..... would she believe those words.....?”**

**“This bastard.....!”**

There was a bang. Borg had slammed his hand on the table.

**“Do, do you think I'll yield to this bullshit? Me? Borg? The branch manager of the Black Dragon Street!?”**

**“Yup…….”**

I coughed up another lump of blood.

**“You’ll yield.”**

I held Borg within my hazy gaze.

**“Because you’re a coward…….”**

I spoke.

**“The Black Dragon Street exists for the sake of humanity……? The minimum requirement……? You’re saying some interesting things…… I think that’s somewhat correct as well…… However, you…….”**

I spat out blood and continued———

**“I don’t believe, that you think that way…… The fact that you’re upset, the fact that you dislike dogs that bite their owners…… Borg Edentras…… is simply, because you don’t have the confidence to bite your own owner…… because you’re jealous of the people who can.”**

Borg took a step back. His leg pushed his chair and made it fall over, causing a loud crash.

With his teeth gritted, he looked down at me with eyes that appeared as if he were staring at a ghost.

**“What bullshit……!”**

**“I know.”**

**“Nonsense……!”**

**“I know someone, who’s just like you.”**

I believed that the two of you were similar ever since Zia told me

about you, and my beliefs were confirmed when Zia did as I advised and gave you the documents.

**“And I…… really liked that fellow.”**

Eun Minseon was a girl who was so easy to read, that she was nearly transparent.

**“Now then…… Borg.”**

I spoke.

**“You have two choices……. First…… Ariya will scream…… Roroa will come…… and she has the antidote…… she’ll cure me with that…… and then arrest you for attempting to poison me to death…….”**

Borg’s expression changed by each passing second. It was at the point that I could visibly see the thoughts that were spinning through his head. Regardless, I continued.

**“If you don’t like this, then your second choice…… you’ll cure me with your own two hands…… and you’ll…… get in the same boat as me…… and help me…… bring Sophna down…….”**

Borg shouted in a fit of rage.

**“Hah! There’s also the third choice! I can kill the two of you! And kill the dog out there as well! No, I can just kill Goldbeard as well! By doing so, if I’m able to conceal the fact that you guys were here, then……!”**

**“Did you forget……? I…… came here to meet you.”**

I obviously prepared for that as well.

The very fact that this great individual, the branch manager of the Black Dragon Street, was unable to consider this obvious possibility

made it apparent on how panicked he was right now.

**“The moment I sat down in front of you…… the situation had already…….”**

I coughed up more blood. Once more, I vomited blood once more.

And I vomited blood again.

I coughed more blood.

Ah, so I have this much blood in my body. This thought went through my head as I pressed my beads against my forehead.

**“Edentras! There’s no time……!”**

Ariya shouted.

Borg audibly gnashed his teeth. He dashed forward from his position and approached me. He dug something out from one of his pockets and shoved it into my mouth. As a clear and cool sensation went down my throat, my breathing became easier.

I was cured. My dizziness became clear, and although my vision had become dark, my complexion returned and a warmth soon spread throughout my entire body.

**“Why?”**

Borg gritted his teeth.

**“Why did you do this!?”**

**“Because it didn’t seem like I could make you move with just my words. I believed that showing you my resolve was the right thing to do.”**

**“Resolve!? Threatening me by inflicting self-harm! What does life mean to you!?”**

**“Yes, but.”**

I still didn't have any energy.

**“There's always the possibility of dying.”**

I couldn't even put strength into the hand that I was holding my beads with.

**“If I don't take the risk now, then I'll die anyway…… Such is life.”**

I also thought that those were dispirited words, but Borg seemed to have understood immediately.

**“You think that old lady Sophna is going to kill you?”**

**“To be exact, before the end of this month,”** I told him.

Because she had witnessed me win Ariya over, because she saw that I had gotten close with Sii, because the Silver Lion Earl had taken my side, because Lady Dansoomyo was coming soon, because she was ordered by the Silver Lion Earl to cooperate with me in order to deal with Lady Dansoomyo.

If I had to give a reason, then I could probably give hundreds.

The instant I was able to leave the basement alive, Sophna may have intended to kill me regardless of whatever happened afterward.

I wasn't being paranoid. I had a lot of evidence, but the biggest clue was the fact that if that weren't the case, then Yudia wouldn't have accepted my wager. Yudia also believed that I was going to die before the end of this month. This was the reason why he said that he would only be taking my belongings if he were to win the wager, and this was also the reason why he had candidly revealed the fact that he had killed the Gongshik members.

He was truly a damnable person.



Yudia Batsand. If there were someone in this world who I could hate, then it would most likely be you. Not the Earl, or even Sophna who was clearly directing her killing intent towards me, but you.

Regrettably.

Detestably.

As expected, it wasn't my paranoia. It didn't seem like Yudia was making the wrong assumption either. The Black Dragon Street branch manager within Water Dragon City composed himself. He let out a sigh as he looked at me with eyes that looked as if he were looking at someone bizarre.

**“Dear God, Orgit. What is this person?”**

**“My Fair Grace.”**

Ariya Orgit answered. Borg shook his head.

**“He doesn't seem like it. As the possessor of the title Lunar Scorpion, I guarantee that he isn't. Never in my entire life have I ever seen a person who's as poisonous as this boy. Moreover, it seems you've already been poisoned.”**

**“How about you, Edentras.”**

**“It seems I'm not in a situation where I can talk about other people.”**

Borg closed his mouth as if he were lamenting.

While receiving Ariya's considerate gesture as she wiped the corners of my mouth, I raised my head.

**“You'll help me, right?”**

**“Do I have any other choice?”**

**“No.”**

**“I should break your genital bone.”**

I don't have that either.

I explained to Borg what he had to do from this point on. As expected of the branch manager of the Black Dragon Street, it didn't take long to explain everything to him since he had a good head on his shoulders.

**“All right, let's clean up together.”**

**“Are you telling a branch manager of the Black Dragon Street to clean?”**

**“Yup. We have to make sure that no one finds out about what happened here, right? That's why we're cleaning.”**

**“Thirteenth finger-like bastard.”**

That swear roughly translates to 'It would only be right if you were eradicated'.

Ariya took out the cleaning supplies, which we had prepared beforehand, from the suitcase that I had brought from Earth. We were able to take care of the cleaning quickly with the three of us. Once we finished cleaning, I changed into the clothes which were also in the suitcase. I took out a single packet of cigarettes while I was at it and tossed it.

**“A gift.”**

A glint of yearning appeared in the grumbling Borg's eyes for a moment.

**“Cigarettes from your world, huh. It's been a long time.”**

**“It's not good for your body. Don't smoke a bunch at once.”**

**“Mind your own business. Poison is my specialty.”**

Even though he went on about having an occupational disease. It was because he would say two different things with his mouth, that it was difficult for him to be anything other than a thief.

**“Go out through a different door. Put your disguise back on as well.”**

Borg, who was about to immediately take a smoking break, clicked his tongue and put the pack away.

**“So you want to act as if we never met.”**

**“Yeah. I’ll see you later.”**

Borg did so.



Shortly after, when I exited the reception room while being supported by Ariya, Rihittle Odeon was collapsed on the table with a face that looked as if he had his beard torn off. Roroa Ara Harte, who was enjoying herself like a dog gnawing on a bone, waved her small hand at us.

**“Wan! Welcome back, wan.”**

I gave her a peace sign.

**“Yup. How’d things go?”**

**“I was able to socialize with an old friend again, wan.”**

**“That’s good.”**

Rihittle groaned. I grinned and sat down across from Rihittle.

**“Did she tell you everything?”**

Rihittle promptly raised his head back up.

**“Yes, I believe that this will be good business.”**

**“Right~? How about the banquet tonight? Did you hear about that as well?”**

**“I did hear about that, but, uh, does it have to be today? If you give us a couple of more days, then we could hold an even grander one…….”**

How much did he get harassed for him to raise the flag this much?

**“Today is perfect~ I’ll help you with the details. In any case, can you write up an invitation for Our Excellency the Earl?”**

**Yes, right away.”**

Rihittle wrote the invitation with shaking hands. Seriously, how much was he harassed?

Rorora flapped her ears after she received the letter of invitation from him.

**“Wan! I’ll see you at the castle.”**

Rorora departed. While making a face that appeared as if he could breathe at last, the collapsed Rihittle managed to let out a sigh of relief.

**“Right, uh. Wasn’t there someone in the room you were in earlier?”**

**“There was some grandpa. Were you talking with him?”**

Rihittle looked relieved for several different reasons.

**“Ah, yes. Well, it wasn’t particularly important. Just business talk. Is he still there?”**

**“No, he left. He told me to tell you that he’ll finish the talk between the two of you tomorrow.”**

**“Is that so? Ehem. Well. ....Will you be staying here until the evening?”**

**“Can I not?”**

**“No, it’s not like you can’t..... If anything, that would be great. Thanks to you, my schedule has freed up a bit. Let us talk while the banquet is being prepared.”**

Rihittle Odean’s expression became more relaxed as he then spoke with a lively attitude. He was most likely scheming in order to obtain information from me about my world since I didn’t appear too smart in his eyes.

I didn’t hate that shrewd attitude of his. I also had some information that I wanted to hear.

**“All right~ I’m also free today. Let’s talk.”** Of course, I was going to be the one holding onto the reins of the conversation despite having said this. **“Her Excellency the Earl is a fussy person, so I also have to teach you how to welcome her.”**

Rihittle flinched. I grinned.

We then chatted. It didn’t even take me 30 minutes in order to obtain all of the information that Rihittle had regarding Lady Dansoomyo, but excluding that, he was still quite the interesting conversation partner. He was also underhanded in a way similar to Borg, so if anything, he was easy to handle. It got to the point where

he would ask me this a while later.

**“Would it really be fine if I just set things up according to your instructions?”**

**“Trust me.”**

It was at this moment that Ariya, who had gone to help set up the banquet, had returned and bowed her head to me.

**“Her Excellency the Silver Lion Earl and Miss Zia Batsand have arrived.”**

## Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\]](#) I can't remember if this was mentioned before, but 'accept the thirteenth' is basically a saying in this world that means 'be really accepting/attentive'. The number twelve is usually the standard in this world, so taking in a thirteenth means that much.





I lived a life where I had received quite the amount of love. As this was not a distorted fact, at the very least, it was the truth in their perspectives.

Recurring truths contained immense strength. Although the church which my aunt dragged me to was annoying, Chanmi made my life feel like Hell, and the theory of the girl who used to sit behind me was sad, Eun Minseon's offer was, aaah, it was tempting. Those who were born as rulers must have had the ability to know when their subjects were at their weakest moments. I sincerely contemplated committing suicide. Ironically, the church which I was forced to attend kept me from doing so. In the church I attended, they considered suicide to be a crime that was on the same level of becoming an apostate.

Like that, I had returned to my first church. I was tired for several different reasons. I spoke like a creaking doll. Even though everyone has been saying that they're doing these things for my sake, in truth, I'm suffering so much that I cannot endure it much longer. In the end, all of this is, well, my fault, isn't it? My aunt answered me while still in her praying posture.

We are weak. We are also evil. That was how we were created. We are easily lured into temptation and commit crimes after becoming dyed in wickedness. However, Our Lord has not abandoned us. Our Lord is constantly trying to lead and bring us into his embrace. Even though it would have been fine if he were to throw us away, he tries to forgive our sins.

Did you know that history is written down in this book, lost lamb? The amount Our Lord admires us is written here. Did you know that he had even sent his own son down to us? Do you know how his son treated us? Did you know that his son's life was taken by our hands? Did you know that regardless of that, he still forgave us when he

resurrected? Did you know that, despite that, Our Lord still embraces us and opens the gates of Heaven for us?

Do you truly understand how much Our Lord loves us?

Even if you are unable to have goodwill, you need to at least be able to accept the goodwill given to us by Our Lord. If you have even the slightest bit of a conscience, then that's what you must do.

I nodded my head. Aha, I see. In other words, my aunt believed in an existence that gave out good faith unconditionally. She followed him. My aunt, the other people were providing for me through that method. Like that, I was barely able to understand my aunt..... the girl who sat behind me, Joo Chanmi, Eun Minseon, I believed that I could understand them.....

I wanted to understand.



The Silver Lion Earl was a girl who only wore one outfit. She would only change momentarily whenever she went to sleep, but outside of that, she would always wear the same clothes. A coat with fluffy sleeves, a shirt, a skirt, knee socks, and several accessories. The Silver Lion Earl said this in regard to that.

⟨This is my greatest equipment.⟩

Zia, who was coincidentally walking by, nodded her head deeply.

⟨I acknowledge this.⟩

And continued on her way.

The Earl watched Zia leave with blank eyes before continuing her explanation.

⟨For starters, this has the best performance. Different to the clothes in your world, Mr. Yujin, this world is filled with enchanted products. In other words, it means that not only do you have to consider the design when selecting articles of clothing, but you have to consider their performances as well. Aha, if you're poor, then you have to only consider the performance and become a fashion terrorist, or if you're rich, then you could do crazy things like becoming a monster and having protection enchantments lathered all over a bunch of cloth equipment, but I'm in the exact middle. I'm able to wear gear that has both a good design and performance for a long period of time.⟩

Coincidentally, Zia, who happened to be passing by, bowed her head deeply.

⟨That's basically Her Excellency the Earl's balanced gear.⟩<sup>[1]</sup>

And she passed by once more.

The conversation ended there as the Earl had then done a flying kick on Zia's back, but in any case, the Silver Lion had boyish tendencies like that. If both the formality and performance weren't superior, then she wouldn't change into them. The fact that she wasn't saving up to buy the next advancement of her gear, but was instead spending more money, made her seem even more like a young kid.

Even now, after the Silver Lion Earl had arrived after receiving the invitation to the banquet, she was wearing the same clothes. The only thing different was the fact that she was wearing shoes. She was wearing Samsun slippers with 'Silver Lion Earl' written on the white lines.

"It suits you."

“As expected of Mr. Yujin. Your eyes go straight to the feet first.”

There was a sharp tone in her voice.

Zia, who was standing beside her, cleared her throat.

“Mm, Yujin. Guide us quickly.”

I couldn't see Sophna.

The Silver Lion Earl's mood was most likely dampened because of that very reason, but that was an issue I had to endure.

I glanced at Zia for a moment. I then nodded the instant Zia paused.

“This way.”

**“Welcome, Your Excellency the Silver Lion Earl!”**

The Goldbeard Merchant Group members were standing in the hallway outside of the banquet hall as they shouted in a resounding voice. The Silver Lion Earl's expression relaxed slightly.

**“Be at ease. Who is the head of this merchant group?”**

Rihittle Odeon stepped forward and bowed.

**“My name is Rihittle Odeon. We feel honored that Your Excellency is here to attend this hastily prepared banquet.”**

**“There is nothing to be honored about. Be at ease.”**

**“That is not the case, Your Excellency! We should have personally gone to ask after Your Excellency first, but we shall surely repay this dishonor for making Your Excellency grace us with your royal presence!”**

They were behaving exactly as I had instructed.

Thanks to that, the Silver Lion Earl narrowed her eyes.

**“Do I have to tell you to be at ease for the third time?”**

Rihittle flinched. He looked at me with eyes that appeared as if he were saying that this wasn't like how I had explained things to him, so I kindly made an expression that appeared as if I were also bewildered. As these sorts of incidents were going to happen continuously throughout the banquet, their evaluation of my ability was going to be lowered, and Rihittle Odeon's sponsor, Lady Dansoomyo, was going to be given these demagnified pieces of information as well. If what Borg said about my reputation gradually spreading is true, then it would be best if people's assessment of me was on the low side. The fact that Rihittle was going to constantly lose the initiative throughout the banquet was, well, a subsidiary effect.

Zia stepped forward.

**“Head of the Goldbeard Merchant Group, as Her Excellency the Earl's sword, I give you our thanks for your sincerity. We are looking forward to the banquet.”**

**“Ah, yes! Please come in!”**

Rihittle hastily guided us to the banquet hall.

Despite it having been prepared in a rush, as expected of a merchant group that mostly handled food products, it was a splendid banquet. Oily rabbit pork ears that were fried, crispy baked rabbit pork ears, centipede chicken cooked enough so that their back rib-like things could be ripped out with ease, barbeque-seasoned centipede drumsticks, griddled mashed grape potatoes, grape potatoes vegetable pancakes, etc. These were things that were salty, greasy, and too stimulative for my taste, but it was because of these very reasons that they were perfect to capture the Silver Lion Earl's appetite.

**“These taste great. Especially the grape potatoes vegetable pancakes.”**

It seems to have captured Zia's appetite as well. Rihittle made a pleased expression.

**“Uhuhu! Thank you for your compliment, Miss Azure Rose Knight. These grape potatoes were lifted from the farm managed by my mother.”**

**“Your mother owns a farm?”**

**“Yes. She is over sixty years old, but she is still hale and hearty. Ah, there was a thing that happened during the harvest season last year…….”**

Rihittle went on to tell a story due to his excitement. It seems that Zia was talking to him while giving surprisingly sane responses.

Of course, this fellow would speak properly whenever she talked with people like Yudia or the other maids. From what I could tell, the only people Zia spoke Zia-like with was me and the Earl. For some reason, this feeling which would normally feel warm in a created story felt annoying to me right now. The fact that she could annoy me even though I wasn't the person she was talking sanely to made her quite the impressive person…….

**“I must have really missed you.”**

**“What are you saying all of a sudden, Yujin?”**

**“Nothing. Earl, have another glass.”**

I poured a glass of wine that was supposedly made from silver strawberries and handed it to her. The Silver Lion Earl took a sip and let out a refreshing 'kaah' sound.

**“Hmmm, it's good. This is good alcohol. It's sweet as well. Merchant Head, where was this brewed?”**

Rihittle looked as if he were rejoicing.

**“Ah, that was brewed on my mother’s farm as well.”**

**“I see. Your mother’s farm must be quite large. Did you say that it was in the Pig Palatinate?”**

**“Yes. Has Your Excellency been there before?”**

**“It’s a nice place. Don’t they hold a rabbit pig hunting festival in the middle of the sixth month? There was a time when I had participated in that. Although this was something that happened when I was still a really young lady.”**

**“I see. They also hold a rabbit pig contest around that time as well. When I was little, I was able to get second place with the rabbit pig I was raising. She was a spotted rabbit pig with a spot over her eye, but she was quite cute.”**

**“Ahaha, you had quite the cute childhood. Second place, was it? That’s impressive.”**

**“Haha, well, even if I say that, I’m the sixth child in my family so it was of no use…….”**

**“You must have had it rough.”**

Her mood must have gotten better as the grinning Silver Lion Earl then wrapped her arm around my shoulder while I was seated beside her.

**“Merchant Head, if my lover here was in any way discourteous towards you, then I shall apologize for it. He’s from another world, so he isn’t accustomed to the etiquette of this world.”**

I lowered my eyes with an obedient and quiet look on my face. Rihittle glanced at me for a moment before grinning.

**“Haha, no. He is quite the energetic person. I believe that he is like a splendid ring that flatters Your Excellency the**

**Earl's class."**

**"That is a relief, then."**

The Silver Lion Earl played around with my earlobe. A chill ran up my spine. I rubbed my head against the Earl's shoulder before slightly raising my head and bringing my mouth to her ear.

"This is just some random muttering in order to make it appear as if I'm whispering something to you."

The Silver Lion Earl chuckled.

"Mr. Yujin, you really are rather weak to alcohol."

"I've loosened up not because of the alcohol but because of Zia."

I looked at Zia as I said that. Zia was gazing at me with hesitating eyes.

The Silver Lion Earl spoke with a grin.

"I admit that as well. She's quite the drug. But is this small talk necessary?"

"Yeah. If we converse while mixing in an appropriate amount of Korean, then the other party will continue to stay nervous."

The Silver Lion Earl glanced at Rihittle Odeon who was making a nervous expression once more before smirking.

"All riight. Do you mind if I ask you for some tips? I'm in the middle of playing a game on the VITA."

"If it's a game that I know."

Like so, we talked about a game in Korean while we exchanged gossip with Rihittle Odeon in this world's language.

**"In other words, you're saying that the purpose of your**



**current visit is simply to do business and that it's unrelated to your sponsor?"**

**"Yes, Lady Dansoomyo is not very interested in gourmandism. She is also going to be coming here with the Modification Bracelet Merchant Group which Chief Morso manages."**

**"I see."** The Silver Lion Earl turned to face me. "So you're saying that there's a secret room there?"

**"Yup. There was a doorplate that said something like 'do not be afraid and charge forward', right?"**

**"Ah, that's what that meant. Nothing appeared when I used Search, so I disregarded it."**

**"It's a fake wall. You can go through it if you just rush forward." I tilted my head at Rihittle. "Isn't the Modification Bracelet Merchant Group the group that specializes in selling slaves?"**

**"Yes, that is the case. It is the merchant group that is the most loyal to Lady Dansoomyo. In truth, I sometimes get the thought that she may not be that interested in our side."**

**"She's like that. She indulges in her hobbies so much that she doesn't realize who is truly important. She'll probably stay in our castle when she arrives, so I'll put in a good word for you."**

**"Oh dear, Your Excellency the Earl. There is nothing more I could possibly wish for than that."**

**"YesYes."** The Silver Lion Earl turned back to me. "What skill tree should I put my points into?"

Even I had to admit that the flow of the conversation was chaotic. It became even more hectic once Zia took part in it as well.

“Role-playing games aren’t really to my liking. Dating simulators are much more straightforward.”

“Aha, is that so, Zia? I wasn’t curious so I never asked.”

“Don’t be unreasonable, Your Excellency. I believe that grasping the preferences of one’s knights is one of the most important tasks.”

“Is what Zia says, but what do you think, Mr. Yujin?”

“As the expression ‘one of the most important’ is a typical example of English translationese, I believe that people should refrain from using that phrase too much.”

“Language is something that changes. Languages that refuse to change will only end up dying. Furthermore, there’s definitely a nuance out there that can only survive if that phrase is used. It’s there in that place that can be reached if you were to put your arm out. Despite that, can a fellow who goes against the rules of the past and refuses to reach their hand out be considered a knight in the truest sense? No. That person wouldn’t be a knight, they would be nothing more than a specter. In other words, by using that phrase, I’m able to save the existence known as the Korean language which is trying to become complicated, and all of the other nuances that could possibly be saved as well.” Zia Batsand brought her eyes back to Rihittle Odeon once she had finished her long-winded speech. **“In that regard, there is something I wish to ask. Can you tell me what group is escorting your merchant group?”**

**“Ah, for now, we are handling it autonomously. There’s also the comrades I had back during my adventuring days. Once our scale becomes bigger, I plan to ask the people at the Silver Blade Mountain Cabin(Ri’ extro-padel, 銀劍山莊).”**

**“I see. I was simply asking because, among my nephews, one of them manages the Martial Origin branch within the Pig Palatinate…….”**

The reason why Zia’s inexperienced nephew was a branch manager

was due to the fact that Yudia had lived for such a long time that the family tree of his disciples had become convoluted. It seems that this was a common thing in this world where the concept of ascending existed. Albeit, looking at this, this made the price of my wager with Yudia seem incredibly shocking.

Rihittle Odeon rejoiced.

**“Ooh, I am grateful for those kind words. I shall consider this offer positively.”**

“That ‘consider this offer positively’ can be interpreted as a refusal.”

“Mm, as expected, is he afraid of my teacher……?”

“If anything, the issue is the supply routes. The Martial Origin has a premium seat right now, don’t they? If the merchant group doesn’t intend to develop a monopolized route, then using them as escorts would be a waste of money.”

“As expected of Your Excellency, such wisdom.”

“I’ve been told that since a long time ago. Although, if I remember correctly, you’ve been told that as well with me.”

“Moving the words of others is also proof of one’s wisdom. Isn’t there that one saying where the fools move food, normal people move knowledge, and wise people move words?”

The line that Zia had just spoken was one of this world’s sayings. Instead of moving a horse that cannot be moved, move a horse that will move with you, however, helping it move faster is the best type of movement. As you may have guessed, it wasn’t ‘words’ but ‘horse’. Therefore, Zia had made a pun at quite the peculiar moment…… I believe I’m also not quite right in the head since I was going out of my way to explain this.

The atmosphere of the banquet continued to elevate while within these circumstances. Rihittle Odeon served us with valuable bottles of

alcohol unsparingly. This was, at the very least, going according to the information I had given him. I couldn't say that she was a good drinker, and she most likely didn't enjoy drinking that much either. The Earl simply knows how to drink.

And there was a need for the Earl to be reasonably intoxicated.

I stood up from my seat around the time I believed that she was drunk enough.

“Earl, I’m going to go use the restroom.”

“Huu~? I see that your bladder is weak. Have a nice trip.”

“Yeah, I’ll be right back. Ariya, you can just stay here. I know where the restroom is.”

Like that, I stepped out into the hallway. I then walked forward and turned a corner.

Eye drops…… I probably won’t need them.

I then waited for a moment while gazing out the window.

I didn’t have to wait long.

A voice came from behind me.

“Yujin?”

It was Zia’s voice.

I pretended to hunch my shoulders as I let out a single breath.

“Yujin.”

I let out another breath before raising my head.

“Why’d you leave too? Are you going to the restroom as well?”

“Yujin, as I thought, did something happen?”

I let out another breath.

“Something? Nothing happened.”

“But your behavior has been a bit…… you were like this back when we met at the arena and also during the banquet just now. You kept glancing at me during the meal as well.”

So she noticed that. I was considering the possibility that she wouldn’t have caught wind of that at all.

“Moreover, before we left the castle, Alshi said…….”

I raised my head at that moment, making Zia stop in the middle of her sentence. To be more precise, she stopped because the brands on my chest were revealed the instant I had raised my head.

Zia was speechless. I pretended to follow her gaze before pausing, adjusting my collar, and averting my gaze.

“That Alshi, I see that she said something needlessly.”

Once I answered in a way that sounded as if my secret had been discovered, a hurt look appeared on Zia’s face.

“Yujin…… those marks on your chest.”

“It’s nothing special. More importantly, shouldn’t you be heading back? You have to be at the Earl’s side, right, Miss Bodyguard Knight?”

“It should be fine for the time being since Ariya is with her. Rather, don’t try to change the topic, Yujin! How could this be nothing special, there’s no way…….”

This moment was crucial.

“There’s no way?”

Zia flinched.

“What if there is no way, my sword?”

I took a step towards Zia and looked up at her.

“Will you take responsibility and send me back?”

“Yujin..... you.”

Seeing as how Zia couldn't finish that sentence, it seems that I was doing a good job. I was still capable of making the corners of my eyes red even without eye drops.

There was a long silence.

“.....I'm sorry.”

Zia uttered those words.

“It's fine.” I gave her a small smile. “That's not like you.”

“But..... I'm, always just a helper. Even though these things are happening to you, I'm not doing anything..... I've been imitating drawings because I thought there was more time left.....”

Oh dear, she'll start crying at this rate. I feel bad.

Fortunately, before she could show any tears, that man arrived.

**“Good evening, Azure Rose Knight.”**

**“.....!?”**

Zia's head shot up instantly and I followed her gaze.

As if he had been there since the very beginning, Borg Edentras was leaning against the wall.



Zia was fast when it came to recovering her composure. Really fast.

After immediately placing her hand on the handle of her sword, the Azure Rose Knight spoke coldly.

**“Why are you here?”**

Borg waved his hand.

**“Whoa there, stop stop. I’m not here to fight. I’m only here because I have business with the lord.”**

**“Her Excellency is currently in the middle of her meal.”**

**“I know. I’m not sure if you heard, but I was also abruptly summoned while in the middle of my meal. The lord is an impartial person, so surely she’ll understand.”**

Borg spoke as if he were still griping about what happened back when he was summoned in the Lord’s office. He was following my instructions well.

Zia closed one eye before opening it back up.

**“Truly, you are a man of small caliber. So? What business do you have with Her Excellency?”**

**“Information about the Gongshik.”**

Zia paused.

**“.....Did you come here just because you had gained information? I would have never guessed that you were a**

**citizen with such deep loyalty.”**

**“Loyalty my ass. It’s commerce. I’ve been low on cash lately thanks to a certain someone. If I have something to sell, then be it delivery or something else, I’ll do it. I’ll also be able to include that much of a service fee as well.”**

As you might have guessed by now, I had instructed him to say this as well. There was a need for Borg to receive a fee for this disclosure of information since it meant that we would be able to avoid suspicion.

However, because this wasn’t enough.

**“You have ulterior motives.”**

I took a step forward.

**“You could have sent a subordinate. There’s no reason for the branch manager of the Black Dragon Street to have come here in person. What’s your aim?”**

Borg then looked at me with a gaze that appeared as if he were gazing at a bastard. I returned his gaze, and in return, I ended up receiving a look that appeared as if he were looking at a son of a bitch.

**“As Mr. Otherworlder had said, I could have sent someone else. However, all of my men seemed to be afraid of the lord, so I was also afraid that they might mess something up if I were to send them. What other choice do I have but to come here personally?”**

He was following my instructions to a T. This much should be enough for there to be no more questions about why Borg was here in person.

Honestly, we probably didn’t have to go this far. Zia closed her eyes and opened them slowly.



“Yujin, call Her Excellency the Earl here.”

“Will it be okay?”

“It’s okay. This guy isn’t an idiot. He most likely isn’t here to mess around. If he is, then you’ll probably catch wind of it. More importantly, you’re also helping with the investigation on the Gongshik. You’ll be able to lessen your workload if you’re able to get some clues like this.”

‘Like this’, I felt as if I could hear these words throughout my entire body.

Although I was grateful for these words.

**“There’s no need.”**

I glared at Borg and continued.

**“If you have something to say, then say it here. We’ll determine whether we’ll convey your message to the Earl or not.”**

Borg glared back at me. It wasn’t for long.

**“Are you guys going to pay the information fee?”**

**“That isn’t for you to determine either. If your information is useful, then we’ll convey it to the Earl.”**

**“How foolish. Why do I have to comply with such a thing?”**

**“That’s because you’re here talking to us instead of going straight to the Earl. This means that there’s a reason why you aren’t able to go straight to her.”**

Of course, there was indeed a reason. It was because I told him not to.

Borg then looked at me with a gaze that appeared as if he were

looking at a pile of trash before speaking.

**“Yeah, there is one. Azure Rose Knight probably knows about it well, but there are some circumstances that are preventing me from carelessly meeting Her Excellency the Earl.”**

Zia appeared as if she understood. She probably jumped to the conclusion that it was difficult for Borg to approach the Earl since he had once been moving behind-the-scenes after being contacted by the Mage Tower. Furthermore, as he had mentioned earlier, he was in a situation where it was difficult to even send one of his subordinates. She most likely understood it as him trying to use her as a proxy since she was in the same situation.

Borg turned his head with a twisted face.

**“At any rate, I get it. Since it’s the Azure Rose Knight who’s guaranteeing me, it’ll probably be conveyed properly. Azure Rose Knight, it’s also related to you.”**

**“.....It is related to me? What do you mean?”**

**“The ones who assaulted this otherworlder weren’t members of the Gongshik. The Gongshik members became corpses shortly after entering the city. They met their ends at the hands of your teacher, Yudia Batsand.”**

Zia froze in place. This as well didn’t last that long.

**“Do you have proof to back this claim?”**

**“I do.”**

Borg took out a couple of documents. After receiving the documents, Zia’s face gradually became rigid as she read through them. I’m not sure if those documents are real or not, but they seemed to be enough to gain Zia’s trust.

Additionally, everything that was said until now was the truth.

**“Isn’t it interesting? The fact that those Gongshik members, who had died at the hands of your teacher a while back, had come back to life and assaulted this otherworlder. It’s a bit too elaborate for it to be a coincidence.”**

**“The one who had dealt with the Gongshik members assaulted Yujin…… In other words, you are saying that my teacher was the one who attacked Yujin?”**

**“If he did, then would this otherworlder still be alive?”**

**“He would not. ……Thus, you are saying that a group of people who were somehow able to find out about the Gongshik members’ deaths pretended to be a part of the Gongshik and assaulted Yujin.”**

**“‘Somehow’? You’re beating around the bush too much. You know of a person who’s close enough to your teacher to hear about that and also possesses enough influence to have subordinates.”**

Zia touched her forehead.

She was silent for a while before shaking her head.

She raised her head once more and looked at me, or rather, my chest.

It felt as if I could see a glimpse of the countless thoughts that were going through her head.

I couldn’t actually see them. I didn’t have that sort of ability. I was only capable of guessing. However, it seems that guess wasn’t entirely off the mark.

**“It seems like there’s a lot on your mind. I’ll be excusing myself now. I’ll be looking forward to my payment.”**

Borg snorted in a timely manner and looked at me as he turned around. I gave him an approving look. With his eyes, Borg gave me the bite off all twelve fingers sign. If I were to make a comparison to my world, then that gesture was similar to giving someone the middle finger.

Like that, Borg left. After a long silence, Zia turned to look at me.

“So it was Miss Sophna.”

Her voice sounded tired.

“Miss Sophna most likely didn’t act in person. The maids who had set up Sii…… was it Ashya and Ferril’s group?”

Zia mentioned the names of the pre-established faction maids who followed Sophna.

I averted my gaze.

“Don’t worry about it. That was nothing more than the words of a thief.”

“…….”

“What a jump of logic. How could Sophna be the culprit behind the attack? What possible gain could she get from doing that?”

I didn’t say that this may have been the Mage Tower’s plot. There was a chance that Zia could agree to that.

This much was just enough and my assumption was on the mark. Zia spoke.

“Yujin, you may not know this, but Miss Sophna has a single-minded aspect to her. She’d go through fire and water if it meant that it would be for Her Excellency the Earl’s sake…… Even the things which Her Excellency the Earl refuses, Miss Sophna is someone who would always achieve her goal if she believed that it would be for Her

Excellency's wellbeing. She's different to me for various reasons. As much as this is the case.....”

Although I was already aware of this ever since I witnessed her bind the Earl with her magic vines.

“It's fine.”

I began to walk forward. I snatched the documents away from the still Zia.

I started to rip them apart.

“.....Yujin?”

“Do you have a fire?”

“N-No, I don't. Yujin, don't tell me you're about to burn.....”

“It has to be burned.”

I turned to look at Zia as I continued to tear the documents apart.

“The Earl cherishes Sophna, right? She most likely cherishes her as much as she cherishes you.”

“Because Her Excellency the Earl would be sad if she found out that the person whom she cherishes, Miss Sophna, had done something like this..... Are you saying that you want to avoid this?”

Zia misunderstood my intentions like this for me. Nodding my head was a simple task, but no.

Responding like that wouldn't be like me.

“Try putting me and the cherished Sophna on a scale. Which side would the Earl take?”

This was a statement that befitted me.

“.....Are you saying that Her Excellency the Earl, won't believe this?”

“No. She isn't an idiot. She'll probably believe this. However, it's because she will most likely believe this that——if she learns this truth, then she'll most likely get rid of me and not Sophna. She'll then bury me at that line and end the matter there.”

“There's no way that Her Excellency would......”

“You think she won't?”

Zia closed her mouth. She was unable to open it.

I spoke in a self-deprecating voice.

“If I play my cards right, then it may be possible. So if I obtain help from others first, for example, if I utilize you well at my side, then the Earl might be unable to dispose of me. Nevertheless, that's also a bad plan. She would look weird publically.”

I gave an explanation.

“The Earl got upset about the act which the Gongshik members had committed. If the whole story is revealed, then the dispensation of justice to both services and crimes must follow after. But Sophna is the head vassal and I'm the Earl's lover. If she punishes Sophna, then she would be taking the side of her lover and tossing her head vassal aside. On the other hand, if she refuses to punish Sophna, then that would make the Earl a clown for getting upset over the incident so much. No matter what side she decides to take, the Earl would appear badly in the public eye. Moreover, she would appear even more badly since this would basically be advertising the fact that there's a conflict between her head vassal and her lover. In that case, the Earl wouldn't, uhm, have particularly good emotions towards me, right?”

“But, but Miss Sophna tried to kill you......”

“Yeah. That's why it's something that'll be resolved if I hold myself

back. If it's for the sake of my self-preservation, then this is the best option."

Zia clenched her teeth. She glanced at my chest for a moment again before meeting my eyes.

I spoke.

"Don't make that face."

"Yujin....."

"I heard that some person named Lady Dansoomyo will be arriving soon. The Earl wants for me and Sophna to team up in order to deal with her. Since I'm in this sort of situation. If it's for that, I'll have to resort to this....."

My body was abruptly pulled forward.

I had been pulled into a hug. Within Zia's embrace. Knight-like and trained arms embraced me. She didn't let me go.

A dim scent of roses enveloped me.

I could hear the sound of her heartbeat.

I could hear the sound of weeping.

I could feel the shoulders that were pressed against me tremble.

"I'm sorry."

Zia uttered.

"Sorry."

Zia Batsand uttered——

"I'm really, really sorry."

With a soppy voice, Zia Batsand uttered those words over and over again.

“For calling you to a place like this, for being unable to do anything for you, I’m really sorry. Yujin…….”

There was a time.

There was a knight who had once told me that there were a countless number of things which I couldn’t achieve. There was a female knight who had said that things cannot change once they have occurred. There was a female knight who served the Earl and had once declared that I would die. There was a female knight, loyal to the Earl, who had once tried to kill me, said that no one would believe me, and that the Earl would support her.

This was only 2 months ago.

Within a mere 2 months, a person was capable of changing this much.

Understanding and sympathy were things that could sink in within a period of time that was as short as this.

Sei had said that only fire and poison had a reaction speed that was as fast as this.

Cha Minhee, if my goddess was undoubtedly fire, then I was undoubtedly poison.

The Lunar Scorpion, Borg Edentras had seen it well. Even if he was easy to handle, it seems that adults over the age of 30 naturally had decent insight.

“Zia, it’s fine.”

I patted her back.

“It’s fine, so don’t worry about it.”



If anything, I felt like I should be the one apologizing.

For truly a lot of reasons, Zia. I can't hide how sorry I feel for you.



Rihittle Odeon opened his eyes wide once we returned to the banquet hall.

**“That took a while.**

Zia, who had calmed herself down before returning to the hall, nodded her head.

**“I apologize. Finding the restroom was a bit difficult.”**

**“Ah, oh dear. I should have sent someone to guide you.”**

**“No……. Moreover, I also stopped to watch the moon for a moment while on my way back. The moon was rather clear. I ended up being inadvertently allured by it. I was with Yujin.”**

**“Haha! As one would expect from the one with the title Azure Rose.”**

Zia bowed her head once and sat back down in her seat. I sat as well. A glass of alcohol appeared in my line of sight the instant I took my seat.

It was the Earl.

**“It's not good for you if you drink too much.”**

“Ah, be quiet.”

After sighing as if it couldn't be helped, I held the bottle of alcohol with both of my hands and courteously poured her a glass. The Earl drank it down in a single instant and stretched her hand out towards me.

“Mm.”

Pat, pat. She stroked my head several times before leaning her body against mine. A heat was radiating from her small body. The sweet scent of alcohol. She rubbed her hair, which gave off the scent of mountain strawberries, against my cheek several times before, thud, butting her head against my chin.

“Mr. Yujin. Mr. Yuujin.”

“Yeah?”

“Mine.”

The Silver Lion Earl only tilted her head up in order to look at me. Eyes which resembled the moon were directed towards me.

“You're mine.”

“Yeah.”

I pressed my lips against her forehead.

“I'm yours, Silver Lion Earl.”

The Earl grinned.

She abruptly stood up from her seat and shouted as she raised her bottle.

**“Haa! Today is a good day!”**

The moonlight enveloped the entirety of the banquet hall as it

flowed through the window. The Silver Lion Earl was standing in the air that was being lit by a frosty color.

**“As you all may know, my deceased mother, the Blizzard Cat Countess was from the Cat Palatinate. Everyone is most likely aware of the rumors around the Cat Palatinate. As the lord, I am unable to give you the details, so please understand. However, I will say that a majority of those rumors were true, so although my mother was a calm and elegant person, I will only say that she had a connection with them.”**

The Silver Lion Earl took a sip of her alcohol and caught her breath.

**“Compared to her, what sort of person was my father!? I believe that all of you know about the rumors that had gone around about the previous earl. I will only say that the majority of those rumors were true. He was shallow, worldly, and quite the normal person.”**

Her lips formed the shape of an arc.

**“When I was younger, I was curious. How did the two of them meet? How could they marry each other? Once I found out about the concept of political marriage, my interest in the matter dissipated for a while, but after I found out that it was a love marriage, my curiosity surged even more than before. I wonder why. Why did the two of them get married? A girl from a cruel household and a normal and worldly boy? Are you all not curious?”**

Everyone was holding their breaths as they gazed at the Silver Lion Earl.

**“Of course, the two of them had some similarities. They had two things in common. Instead of competing and occupying things, they preferred to cooperate and distribute things. They also had the same standard when it came to women.”**

Everyone looked shocked. The Silver Lion Earl chuckled and took another sip.

**“Ah hah hah ha, they had quite the funny first meeting. Even if our head vassal is mossy, she’s beautiful and pretty. Back when my mother was still an esteemed daughter of her household and here on delegation, she saw the head vassal. My father was…… well, what do I even have to say? If you know what type of person he was when he was the lord, then you should be able to easily tell how much of a delinquent he was back when he was still the young master. Aha, in any case.”**

The Silver Lion Earl knew how to shine. She was like the moon.

**“Surprisingly, my father was the one to approach her first. ‘Our head vassal is pretty, right?’ My mother apparently gave a sidelong glance. ‘You are right.’ My father then suggested. ‘Do you want to do it together?’ My mother contemplated for a moment before nodding her head. ‘Let us do it together.’ Like that, the two of them joined hands and then began their first hunt. For the sake of our head vassal’s honor, I will not tell you whether they succeeded or not. The obvious thing is the fact that the same thing continued to happen over and over again after that. Oho, yes——the two of them were quite the lechers!”**

The Silver Lion Earl went up on the chair and abruptly pulled my head into a hug.

**“That is probably similar to a family tradition. I heard that my ancestor who had first established the Lion Palatinate was also a lecher. And I definitely inherited their blood.”**

The Silver Lion Earl started to lean her body against me. While using me as a support beam, the Silver Lion Earl glanced around at her audience and chuckled.

**“I am grateful to Mr. Rihittle and the Goldbeard Merchant**

**Group for arranging this banquet for us. I am grateful to Miss Zia for carrying out her duty at my side. I am grateful to Miss Ariya here for having come out here and work outside of the castle. However!”**

She raised her bottle of alcohol high into the air once more.

**“As a lecher, I wish to give a toast to Mr. Yujin here!”**

The Silver Lion Earl held a mouth of alcohol in her mouth. She put the tip of her finger on my chin and started to lift my head.

She looked down at me as I had my head raised.

Her lips approached me like the moonlight and overlapped my lips. Her small and soft tongue reached through my lips, and my lips alone. The alcohol flowed through that gap. The mountain strawberry-flavored alcohol set the insides of my mouth ablaze. I could feel my cheeks heat up as well.

If the moon had a flavor, then it would most likely be this.

The Earl removed her lips from mine. She swirled the silver line that had extended and licked the tip of her finger before shouting with a smile on her face.

**“Now then, let us drink!”**

The banquet started to heat up once more and only ended after the Earl had become completely intoxicated. After Zia and I gave our thanks to Rihittle for his reception, we lifted the Earl up and moved her.

Ariya, who had been silent the entire time, helped us.

## Translator's Notes

1. [\[↑\]](#) After searching around, this is most likely a [Mabinogi](#) reference as there is a gear similar to this. I think.



In church, I had said this to my aunt.

I know that Our Lord won't throw us away. However, if that's the case, then why were we made into such weak beings? Why were we made so that we could be lured by temptation, dyed by evil, and capable of committing crimes? If Our Lord is truly good-natured, omnipotent, and filled with love, then shouldn't he have made us good-natured from the start?

Throughout the past millennium, there were hundreds of millions of people who had thought this question and there were thousands of millions of answers that had been prepared for this. My aunt's answer was polished from one of those answers.

There is a large difference between someone who has no other choice but to be good-natured and someone who is capable of being good-natured.

And then my aunt had said the following:

Our Lord does not wish for us to be dolls. Our Lord is as feeble as the amount he loves and cherishes us. In order to not force us to become good-natured, and therefore, be capable of being good-natured whenever we desired to be so. In order for our good-naturedness to not be forced but sincere. Our Lord had made it so that we are 'capable of being good-natured'.

Once I had heard those words, I was lost again. Doesn't that mean Our Lord doesn't force us to do anything? That means Our Father in Heaven respects us.

Why do you not treat me like him?



Minhee transferring to my school was something that occurred a short while after this question had appeared in my mind.



The inside of the carriage was dim. The windows were small, and the small amount of moonlight that flowed through those windows ended up being engulfed by the black, matte fabrics that decorated the interior of the carriage.

If the Silver Lion Earl, who was nodding off while leaning against Zia's shoulder, wasn't here, then the interior of this carriage would have literally been swallowed by darkness.

She was like a lily of the valley.

The sound of shaking resonated whenever the wheels got caught on something. The sound of wings flapping as the horses that looked like chickens made their way through the darkness. The pleasant sound of breathing that made its way through all of those noises and resounded.

A voice.

"Mr. Yujin....."

I immediately nodded my head while I was sitting on the opposite side of the Earl and watching her.

"Yeah."

"Mr. Yujin, Mr. Yujin, Mr. Yujin, hiccup, mm, Mr. Yuujin."

“Yeah.”

Silence.

“Mr. Yujin…… ahah. Our Mr. Yujin…….”

“I’m listening.”

“Do you resent her……?”

Zia, who was lending her shoulder to the Earl, squirmed.

I, didn’t say anything in return.

The Earl opened her eyes. She raised her head lazily and gazed at me with hazy, drunken eyes as she spoke.

“Don’t resent her, hiccup, too muuuch. Don’t mind it eeeither. I told you, didn’t I? It’s because she’s a grandma. Because she’s so old, really…… **because she’s extremely stubborn…… that idiot…… really stupid…….**”

As expected, I didn’t say anything in return.

“Ah, why aren’t you responding…… I told you to not resent heer. You said you’re my possession, riiight? You said you were mine, hiccup, uu, didn’t you? In that case, in thaataaaase.”

The Earl’s words eventually became mumbling.

It was then that I spoke up.

“You heard?”

“Whaaat, should I have not?”

There’s no way that would be the case.

“I don’t resent her.”

“You aren’t lying, right?”

“Yeah. There must be some sort of misunderstanding.”

“Misunderstanding my ass…… Ah hah hah hah, seriously…… **Bite off all Twelve Fingers, that grandma…….**”

The Silver Lion Earl placed her hand against her head. Zia took a deep breath.



“Your Excellency, if you heard…… then some measures should be,”

“Measures? What fucking nonsense. Ziaa, Ziaa, with what holes did you listen to Mr. Yujin’s words with? I feel like you didn’t listen with your ears, ah, damn it. I——I can’t, uu, I said I caaan’t. I can’t, do aaanything.”

“But…….”

“But, what? What, fuck? Should I call your teacher and scold him? Ask, aaask him why he killed someone in my city and didn’t say a single thing about it to me? Should I execute the grandma? Should I imprison her? Put her on probation? Should I tell her to stop coming up? I’m, I’m going to look weeird. I got that mad, I, I scolded people that much, and I even changed the vice-captain of the guard, for the truth to be this, I’ll look fucking bad. Huh? F-Fuck.”

“Your Excellency!”

Zia shouted powerfully. The Azure Rose Knight cleared her throat and organized her words in this world’s language.

**“As one of your Royal Guard, I am aware of that. The authority of the ruler is more important than anything else. However, that authority does not come from wearing elegant clothes and wielding staffs with gems embedded in them. Those who lay down their clothes and make it so that their servants’ feet are not dirtied, and those who burn their staffs in order to prevent the hands of their maids from freezing are true rulers. The power to rule is something which comes from the acknowledgment and admiration of one’s subjects. As a knight, I am aware of this.”**

“Ah hah ha, what is this? That, that line, mm, where did you take that line from?”

“I just got some motifs from here and there.”

“That seems like the case. Are you sure that it’s ‘a true ruler’ and not a ‘one true psycho’? Hey kids, mu, mud, murd? Mud, yup, be careful to not step in it, why are you giving a s-strip show when you could just say that one line? It’s incomprehensible and I have no idea why you’d burn a staff with a gem embedded in it. Ah hah hah ha, mhm, can’t you just sell the gem and buy them a mountain of firewood?”

“The setting is that all of your subordinates are deaf so they can’t listen to orders. You’re also unable to sell the gem.”

“All right. The setting is quite, ah ha, strict. I still don’t understand why you would burn the staff.”

“In truth, the gem is a diamond and, as you may know, diamonds are highly condensed coal.”

“Thank you for the chemistry lesson. But still, huu, let’s select a direction where you preserve the diamond. Aha, uh…… fire magic? Let’s cast one of those.”

“Your spell goes rampant the instant you incite the fire incantation, causing an Ancient God that was slumbering in the depths of the ocean to awaken. You then come to the realization that the diamond embedded on the staff was enchanted with a spell that could seal the Ancient God. The only way to activate the spell is to burn the entire staff along with the gem. O brave adventurer, what will you do?”

“I raise a white flag to the authority of the DM and burn the staff with the gem embedded in it.”

“Like that, with your own free will, you decide to set the diamond staff ablaze. Peace has returned to the world. The loyalty of your subordinates has increased.”

The Earl giggled while pressing her hand against her forehead. Zia, who had been saying all of this, didn’t laugh.

The Earl didn’t laugh for long.

“Mr. Yujin…….”

“Yeah?”

“You’re wrong about one thing.”

I waited.

“You and Sophna. Even if the two of you are on a scale, of course, I wouldn’t denounce Sophna, but despite that, I wouldn’t cut you off either. I won’t sacrifice you. Because, it’s passed. Yup, that stage has, already passed…….”

In a certain way, those words could be heard as lamenting.

“So don’t worry. I won’t treat my possessions carelessly, ah hah, like that. I won’t treat you carelessly…… this damn city as well, even now, I can’t throw it away……”

I counted to five inside of my head. I then counted down from five.

I spoke.

“I want to believe you.”

While grasping at my branded chest and gazing at her eyes that looked as if I wasn’t able to overcome the alcohol, I spoke.

“Silver Lion Earl, I’m distressed as well. It hurts. ……It’s hard. I want to believe you……. The fact that you cherish me, Earl, the fact that you won’t throw me aside, I want to believe that more than anyone else. I really want to believe you now.”

“Trust me.”

“Make me trust you.”

The Earl looked at me.

I looked at the Earl.

“I want to talk with Sophna. ....Allow me to do so. I don’t care if it’s something that has already happened. Give her a clear order, so that Sophna cannot kill me.....” I paused for a moment before continuing. “.....Request this of her.”

The Silver Lion Earl raised her head and stared at the roof of the carriage. The carriage didn’t shake anymore. We had, at some point, arrived at the castle.

“All right.”

The Earl spread out both of her hands after uttering those words. She stared at the last summon that was available to her this month before clenching her fists.

“All right, let’s go.”

The Silver Lion Earl spoke.



When the Earl, Zia, and I entered the room, Sophna was reading a book. Once she raised her head, her expression changed like a withering leaf.

“Mii, you’ve become drunk again..... As I thought, I should have followed along. Wait a moment, I will quickly create a remedy to get rid of your drunken stupor. Sit there and——.”

“Ah ha, hello Sophna~ Uu, haah! Our Miss Head Vassaaal~! Ehehehe, huu.....”



The Silver Lion Earl spun around with a broad smile on her face before rushing into Sophna's arms. Sophna instinctively hugged her. Sophna had a half-surprised and half-troubled expression on her face as she patted the Silver Lion Earl who was rubbing against her.

"You really are drunk. Zia, were you only watching while by her side? Did you not consider the idea that you should be helpful in times like this?"

Zia didn't answer. The Earl rubbed against Sophna right when she was about to raise her brows.

"Araa? Don't be maaad. I, hiccup, mhm, I! Wanted to drink, so I did, hu, our Miss Head Vassal..... grandma, mm ..... the smell of grass..... ah hah hah ha, mm....."

"There there. That is right, it's your grandma. Grandma is here. How many years has it been since I last hugged you like this? Honestly, **wait. Truly..... if you fall asleep like this then your insides will hurt, so wait a second while I,**"

"But why did you do it?"

A short moment of silence.

"What are you talking about?"

"Why, did you try to kill Mr. Yujin?"

Sophna opened her mouth. It was for only a moment. She then promptly turned to look at me and smiled.

"Oh dear. Did you tattle on me? While in the presence of alcohol at that? It seems that you do not have even the smallest amount of pride."

The Silver Lion Earl's shoulders trembled finely. Zia also bit her bottom lips.

The Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“So it was the truth.”

“That is right, I scolded him a bit. Mii, no matter how I looked at it, this fellow was too suspicious. That is why——”

“That’s why,” the Silver Lion Earl’s voice became disordered. “That’s why, you tried to kill Mr. Yujin.”

“I did that for your sake. For starters, calm yourself down. Sober up and, ah!”

Sophna let out a startled sound. The Silver Lion Earl was hugging her tightly, very tightly.

“Ri——ight now, right now, sober up, ah hah, haa…… are you telling me to, sober, sober up? Ah hah ha, mm, Sophna, Sophnaa…… Why? Why would you do something like that…….”

“Wait, Mii, what is the matter? I told you, this fellow was suspicious. That is why, I,”

“He’s, miine. Mr. Yujin is, ah ha, my possession, that I summoned, but why do you, Sophna, all the time, all the time, grandma, damn it, the people of this city, my words, why don’t you all listen——damn it, damn it. Ah…….”

The panicking Sophna spoke louder.

“Mii! Calm down!”

The Silver Lion Earl also spoke louder.

“Do you think I can calm down!? Castle…… in my castle! **How dare you say those words when you had brought those pieces of trash into my castle!**”

Sophna froze up.

“Pieces of trash?”

“Ah ha, ah——I see. The pieces of trash, aren’t pieces of trash, are they? By sending people that were wearing the masks of those pieces of trash…….”

Sophna began to genuinely panic.

“I have no idea what you are talking about, Mii.”

“Ah hah ha ha ha, you don’t know? How could you not knooow, when you admitted to it just now!? Just a second ago, a second ago ——you admitted it, but you’re trying to feign ignorance? Right now? In this situation? Ah hah ha ha ha ha ha! What, huh? What is this? Even though, just now, you admitted to the fact that you tried to kill Mr. Yujin.”

Sophna breathed in sharply. She glared at me. Although I couldn’t see it, I felt as if several millions of thoughts were colliding with one another like lightning beyond her green eyes.

I took a step back and lowered my head. Zia stepped in front of me as if she intended to protect me. Sophna clenched her jaw.

**“Calm down! I, this lady truly does not know what you are talking about. Your Excellency the Earl, it seems like there is a misunderstanding.”**

Not only was her voice desperate, but it was that impactful as well. However, that impact couldn’t reach the Earl right now. With a completely cracked voice due to the alcohol in her system, the Earl spoke.

“Head Vassal…… Head Vassal, mm, I-I’m trying to not get mad, you know? But, buuut, right now. Are you trying to lie?”

“It is not a lie! Wait, do not tell me.” It seems she had finally grasped the situation as Sophna let out a gasp. “Do not tell me——are you, **suspecting this lady as the culprit behind the**

## Gongshik incident?”

Zia took a step forward as if she couldn't stand to watch this any longer.

“Did you not admit it!?”

“It is a misunderstanding! I…… I was referring to!”

“That you tried to kill Yujin——”

“That is right, with my hands! But with the Gongshik!? The assault incident? I did that? Are you saying that I was the one who had caused that? Why, for what reason would I do such a thing!? For what reason do you believe that I had done such a thing!? Did that boy say so!?”

Blood started to rush to Sophna's head now. With a face that was burning like the color of fallen leaves, she turned towards me abruptly, producing a rustling that sounded as if strong winds were blowing against several branches.

“How, how dare you try to frame me! Hah! You otherworlder who only God knows where you came from. **Your Excellency! Zia! This thirteenth finger-like fellow is trying to frame this lady and…….**”

“**Yujin did not say even a single thing!**”

Sophna hesitated. Zia clenched her teeth.

“**Yujin has never said a single bad thing about you, Miss Sophna! If anything, he tried to protect you, Miss Sophna!**”

“**Protect, what, no, then why exactly are you doubting this lady……?**”

“**Borg Edentras was the one who had given us these clues!**”

Sophna's expression fell into a panic. As she kept looking back and

forth between me, Zia, me again, and Zia again, she eventually fell into a state of disarray.

“Borg did? That, **Lunar Scorpion? .....Why? I, no, wait, still!**” Sophna quickly composed herself and spoke in Korean once more. “You———the two of you are coming after me because you believe the words of a thief? Me? You are trying to lash out at me?”

It was truly fast. She was faster than Borg in terms of poisoning herself.

Too fast.

She was supposed to go on the offense against me a bit more. She was supposed to latch onto the fact that ‘the situation is suspicious’ and fall with that. She had lost her target because of this. She ended up sloppily pointing the arrow towards Borg, attacking the two here for believing him, building hostility which she didn’t have to build, and throwing fuel into an already heated situation…… I did not give her this advice.

I said something else instead.

“I also agree with Sophna. If you think about it again, isn’t it weird?”

Sophna became stunned in response to my support. She most likely couldn’t understand the situation at all now.

“What are you saying, Yujin?”

Zia looked at me with pained eyes and asked that. I shook my head.

“You said that it was Sophna who had sent Ariya to me, right? I was able to live through that incident because Ariya had come. If the culprit behind the assault was Sophna, then it wouldn’t be consistent. That’s why,”

**“Ariya Orgit!”**

**“Yes, Your Excellency the Earl.”**

Ariya, who was on standby outside the room, entered. The Earl turned to look at her with a piercing gaze.

**“What did Sophna say when she sent you, you to Mr. Yujin?”**

Ariya bowed her head by 45 degrees.

**“I was told to observe him.”**

**“Why?”**

**“I was not told the reason.”**

**“Then why did you help Mr. Yujin when you should have just kept observing? Throw aside something like the ‘duty of a maid’ and give me an accurate explanation.”**

**“Coincidentally, it is because Miss Zia had told me something on that day. The fact that I was able to keep my life after having committed that crime on that day was because Sir Yujin had appealed for it to Your Excellency the Earl.”**

The Silver Lion Earl looked at me. Her voice gradually became faster.

“Do you not understand, Mr. Yujin? Ariya rescuing you was just a coincidence. Howeeever, our Head Vassal most likely didn’t like that. Of all people, haa, of all people, are you not curious as to why Alshi was the one who got stabbed? Alshi, Ariya’s lover.”

Although a lot of responses came to my head, they were all things which I mustn’t say.

I held my beads tightly and spoke.

**“That’s an excessive jump of logic. Earl, from what I can see…….”**

“Mr. Yujin. I know that you’re trying to prevent this, aha, from getting any bigger. That’s admirable, but, but, you knooow? You need to mind the time and place or you’ll get nailed.”

I closed my mouth. The Silver Lion Earl turned back to face Sophna.

Sophna was now utterly confused.

“What…… What, nonsense is this?”

The Earl didn’t give Sophna the opportunity to wriggle her way out.

“Aha, yeah. It’s nonsensical. But you know, Sophna, how?”

“What?”

“How did you come up at such perfect timing?”

“That’s…… That is because I had given Ariya a Truth Evoker, after seeing that the Truth Evoker had changed, that’s why…….”

“Ah ha, ah hah hah ha ha, waa, wow, Sophna, Sophnaaa…… For, for you to even———last testament, the Mage Tower’s crest, even though you know……. Even though you know that, Sophna, you.”

The Earl didn’t cry. She didn’t weep either. The corners of her eyes didn’t even become red. Similar to the time when she was trying to execute me, she only gnashed her teeth and muttered with a venomous tone in her voice. Sophna looked at the Earl like a sunflower covered in chemicals. It was at that moment.

It was most likely not due to logic.

Sophna’s head turned slightly. Towards me. She looked at me.

“You.”

Sophna Radgrinkle spoke once she looked into my eyes.

**“It was you…… You.”** The muttering Sophna swung her staff.  
**“Gray, Distortion, Vines!”**

The empty space before Sophna shattered like glass.

A pitch black darkness revealed itself. A boiling darkness surged out like tentacles.

**“Great Rending Slash……!”**

Zia, who was standing in front of me, cut the darkness with the light of her sword. Boof……! The spell vanished just like that. Sophna shouted.

**“What are you doing!?”**

**“I should be the one to ask you that, Miss Sophna! For you to do something like that while in the presence of Her Excellency the Earl……!”**

**“Right now, that boy is trying to frame this lady. All of this is……! Seed, Expand, Burst!”**

Once more, Zia cut down the spell which Sophna had cast. Bang……! The seed-like object, which had been knocked aside, collided against the wall and exploded. The room trembled and the book which Sophna had been reading fell to the floor and spread open. A highlighted line was displayed.

Angry people are not always wise.

Zia rushed forward in order to suppress Sophna. Sophna clenched her jaw and struggled. While this was happening, the desk shook and ended up flipping over.

And then, as if it were fate, something rolled out from the desk.

The Silver Lion Earl glanced down at it. Both Zia and Sophna’s eyes locked onto that spot as well.



The Silver Lion Earl spoke.

“Sophnaa?”

Sophna didn’t answer. Step, step, the sound of footsteps resonated and the Silver Lion Earl soon stopped to pick the items up.

“What is this?”

It was———a bizarre dagger and a mask.

They looked exactly as they did back when they were discovered when Alshi had been stabbed.

The dagger and mask of the Gongshik.

The Silver Lion Earl glanced at them for a moment before turning to Sophna.

“Sophna?”

“I,”

Sophna gasped. A single teardrop flowed down from her eye. ‘I,’ she uttered, ‘I didn’t place them,’ before she could say anything more than this, the Silver Lion Earl spoke first.

“Why are these here?”

**“This lady did not put them there!”**

The Silver Lion Earl tilted her head. A boiling sound came from Sophna’s mouth. Guuh, guuh, she swallowed her anger and resentment down several times, let a single tear fall, and held her staff tightly.

**“It is a trap!”**

The tip of her staff pointed towards me.

**“That boy! That boy did it!”**

“Sophnaaa.”

“Han Yujin……!!”

A white light flew towards me the same instant she let out that bloodcurdling shout.

“Even, even the slightest lie will not be forgiven! Are, are you not the one who had put these here!?”

“I didn’t put them there.”

The white light wrapped around me didn’t change from their white hue.

“Is,” Sophna gnashed her teeth and continued, “is this being here related to you at all!?”

“No.”

The glow was still white.

“If that is the case, then.” Sophna was stumbling with her words. Her expression, tongue, gaze, and mouth were tangled like vines. “If that is the case, then——.”

There was a slap sound.

Sophna fell over. Blood flowed from the corner of her mouth. There was a red mark on her freckled cheek.

The Silver Lion Earl had struck her.

**“Your Excellency…….”**

“Damn it,”

The Earl gritted her teeth.

“Damn it! Why are you behaving so shamefully!?”

**“This lady…… Your Excellency, this lady truly does not……!”**

**“Guards!”**

**“Wan! Did you call, wan, Your Excellency the Earl?”**

It was in the middle of the night. The scale of the disturbance that had occurred was more than enough to have attracted people’s attention. Of course, despite that, the reason why Roroa was able to immediately arrive with the guards was due to the fact that I had told her to prepare beforehand, but starting from the Silver Lion Earl, the other people here didn’t seem to care about this fact.

**“Take her away!”**

The Silver Lion Earl shouted while pointing at the fallen Sophna. The guards looked at each other with surprised looks on their faces, but Roroa hastily entered her unsheathed form and held Sophna down. Zia put her sword away and helped out with a wretched look on her face.

Sophna was only able to collect herself after she had been completely bound. Sophna looked around vacantly before turning towards me. She cried out.

**“Your Excellency……! You must kill that boy!”**

There was no dignity or composure. Sophna twisted her body like a beast that was chained up.

**“Release me! Roroa! Roroa, this lady knows that you have also been sticking close to that boy……! That boy,”** in Korean, “Mii, I! I am always working for your sake!”

“Please.”

The drop of blood touched the floor.

“Please, just…….”

The Silver Lion Earl raised her head while clenching her jaw……  
She looked at Sophna.

“Just this once, listen to what I say…….”

A death-like silence fell over us.

“Sober…….”

Sophna spoke.

“Once you have become sober…… in the morning, at that time, let us talk at that time.”

The Earl didn’t answer. Sophna followed Roroa while lowering her head. The Silver Lion Earl watched her go…… and grabbed at her chest.

She tilted her head.

“Uuk…….”

**“Your Excellency.”**

Zia supported the Earl. The Earl tried to push Zia away but ended up being hugged instead.

“Zia…… Zia. Ah haa, Zia…….”

“Yes, Your Excellency. Zia Batsand, is here.”

“I’m going to sleep…… I want to sleep. Bedroom…… Zia…….”

Zia nodded her head and lifted the Earl onto her back. She then turned to look at me and Ariya. The room was a mess and the residents of the castle were muttering at the door.

“I’ll take care of it.”

Zia nodded in response to my words.

**“Thank you.”**

Zia left, leaving only me and Ariya in the room.

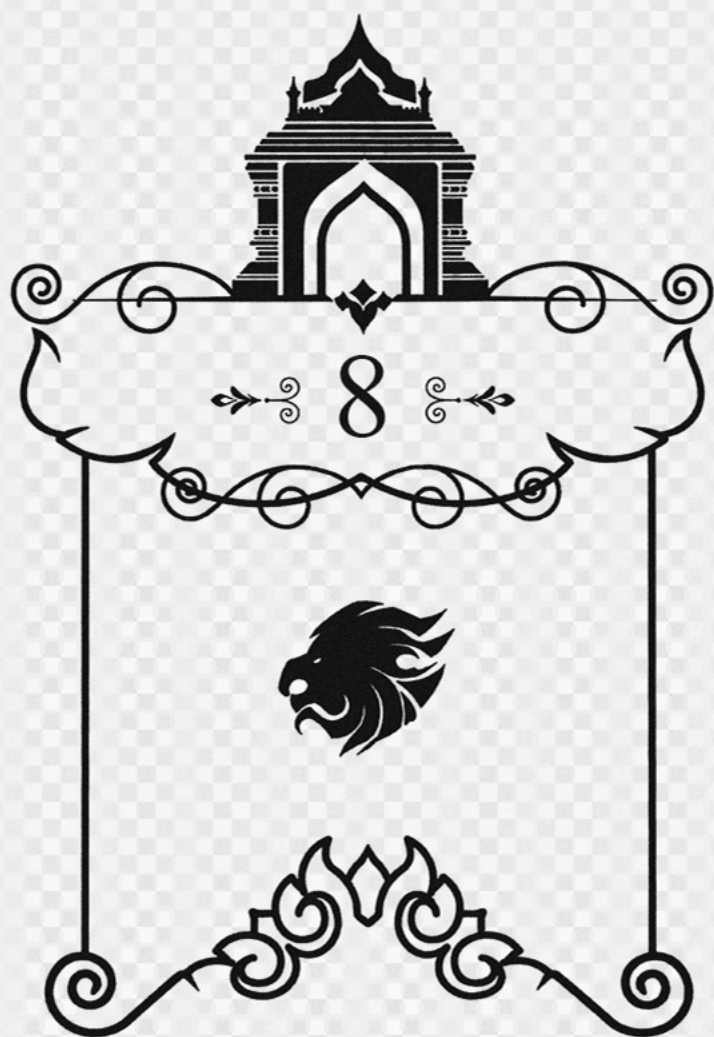
**“Fair Grace…….”**

Ariya called out to me. I nodded.

“Yeah.”

There were still a lot of ears outside of the room. I brought my mouth to Ariya’s ear.

**“Call everyone together. We’re nearing the end.”**



Two days ago, the meeting I held immediately after being branded by the Earl went like the following.

**“What we have to do is simple.”**

I started off the conversation like this.

**“Win Sophna over to our side before Lady Dansoomyo arrives. What should we do if we want to do this?”**

Alshi raised her hand.

**“How about making a request of Her Excellency the Earl and borrowing, that authority? Since you also received proof of, Her Excellency’s affection towards you.”**

**“Rorora, what do you think?”**

**“That’s nonsense, wan.”**

That was the end. Rorora didn’t explain why it was nonsense.

I didn’t tell her to explain either.

Alshi, after thinking about it for a moment, spoke.

**“For starters, it’s safe. There also isn’t a lot of time left before Lady Dansoomyo arrives. Asking Her Excellency the Earl and forcefully making Miss Sophna work together with us, would be the right choice. There’s no reason for it to be, called nonsense.”**

I then spoke up.

**“Explain it to her.”**

**“Yujin will die before that can happen, wan.”**

Roroa spoke as if she were spitting those words out. Ariya was shocked.

**“How do you know that?”**

**“Why wouldn’t I? Ah, of course, it’s because you don’t know that you got caught trying to steal. Wan. Ashya has been getting summoned by Miss Sophna since a couple of days ago, wan.”**

**“Miss Ashya? Of course, since she’s one of the maids that’s a part of the pre-established faction, in order to tend to Miss Sophna, she’d…….”**

**“Ashya is also an executioner who’s affiliated with one of the Black Dragon Street’s assassin groups, the Red Spiked Curtains, wan.”**

Ariya was even more shocked. Sii was surprised as well. I wasn’t surprised since not only did I already hear about this from Roroa, but I had also been keeping tabs on her with my regular hidden camera checks.

Alshi wasn’t surprised either.

**“To be exact, her former occupation was, an executioner. It’s been a long time since she retired.”**

Ariya’s mouth fell open.

**“Alshi, you knew about this?”**

**“We got into an argument once and ended up fighting,”** Alshi answered candidly and turned back to Roroa. **“So you’re saying that Ashya is going to, kill Sir Yujin?”**



**“Who knows? Ashya could be the one to do it or Miss Sophna could utilize some other method. One thing is for sure, if we don’t want to get swept up by the storm, then we have to check the dark butts first, wan.”**

**“Ashya is the dark butt?”**

**“Ashya went out yesterday, wan. Moreover, this morning, there was a conversation at the Black Dragon Street and they spoke with the nuance that ‘the Silver Lion Earl’s otherworlder has one foot in the grave’, wan. Is this not enough to be considered a dark butt, wan?”**

Ariya furrowed her brow.

**“So you’re saying that Miss Ashya is the Black Dragon Street’s pipeline. Why haven’t you unrooted her, Vice-captain of the guard?”**

**“Then a pipeline unknown to me would enter, wan. Additionally, the pipeline which I had planted in the Black Dragon Street would also be unrooted. Wan. At the same time, Ashya is doubling as Miss Sophna’s right-hand person as well, wan. If I were to also answer the question that hasn’t been asked yet, then she had apprehended you without any hesitation because you were a petty thief who didn’t have a background like that, wan.”**

Ariya didn’t slam her hand on the table. I spoke before she could do so.

**“Let’s stop and wrap things up. Sophna does indeed want to kill me in the near future.”**

**“.....Are you certain?”**

Sii asked in a subdued tone.

I nodded. Sii lowered her head.

**“Then I double Alshi’s suggestion. Wouldn’t it be better if we hid behind Her Excellency the Earl?”**

Although Ariya had asked that cautiously, even Alshi shook her head in response.

**“If the opposition’s attack is imminent, then going only on the defense, isn’t preferable.”**

Roroo flapped her ears.

**“Honestly, I would like it if he just died, wan. If he did, then I would be released from my binds and become a free vice-captain of the guard, wan.”**

Sii glared at that Roroo.

**“Yujin, you set up countermeasures, right?”**

**“Yes. I’ve made it so that if I were to die, then Roroo will go through quite the suffering. Furthermore, since Roroo is also already aware of this, she wouldn’t just sit there and watch.”**

**“Mm~~ That’s right. Well, it’s probably because of that that she’s able to say something like this right now. ....Although it doesn’t matter since Yujin won’t die.”**

**“Yes, Miss Sii. In any case, what do you all think must be done in order to prevent my demise?”**

Sii fell into deep thought.

Alshi was the first one to raise her hand this time as well.

**“We get her, with a counter.”**

**“Like I said, how?”**

Sii, who had been thinking of an answer to that question, was the one to respond as she raised her head.

**“False charges.”**

Sii lightly touched her right arm which had once been severed.

**“We counter by putting false charges on her.”**

That was, definitely not an answer that had gone through logic. That's why there was a part about it that caused a spark.

Roroa Ara Harte's eyes glistened.

**“The assault incident!”**

She then continued.

**“Wan! The groundwork has already been established, wan. Yujin had decided to bury the truth behind the assault incident, wan. Therefore, Alshi, Ariya, and I ended up becoming no different to slaves, but there's another problem now, wan.”**

Ariya appeared as if she understood.

**“We don't have a truth to give to Her Excellency now.”**

**“That's it, wan. Yujin did turn her line of sight towards the Mage Tower, but that doesn't change the fact that we don't have anything, wan. Since we don't have anything, we have to make something. If we can frame Miss Sophna in the process of making something, then wouldn't we be killing two birds with one stone, wan? It's good since Miss Sophna also has a Mage Tower membership card. As much as that was an incident which Her Excellency the Earl got upset about, Miss Sophna must have also received quite the blow, wan. Be it making an exchange or winning her over, we just have to do those things well afterward, wan.”**

Roroa flapped her ears and looked at Sii. On one hand, her gaze looked like a dog that was in awe, while on the other hand, she looked

like a wolf aiming for its prey's throat.

I nodded my head.

**“That is a good idea, Miss Sii.”**

**“I-Is that so? Mhm! Obviously! It’s the charisma that Yujin told me to have!”**

Although it felt more like dampness than it did charisma, there probably wasn't a need to mention it.

I decided to say something that was more important.

**“There is an abstract but also realistic issue.”**

There is no strength in lies.

The reason why Chanmi's plots to send Minhee to a youth detention center were destroyed by a single boy was simply because they weren't the truth. The false facts which the prodigy girl had created by utilizing all of her authority and wealth in order to press false charges were so poor that it was as obvious as looking at a fire.

Proudly presenting something like that to the Earl, going as far as to make her even believe it, and finally dealing a blow to that highly confident head vassal was an impossible task.

**“Wan! It’s still a good idea, wan. It’d be a waste to discard such a perfect thing, wan.”**

**“I also think that way. It would probably be better to adopt and build off of that. Let’s think about it more.”**

Everyone turned to look at me with interested looks on their faces.

I adjusted my glasses and nodded.

**“Induction of thought.”**

Similar to the time I had drawn the Mage Tower insignia on the last will which had been discovered when Alshi was stabbed.

**“We make the Earl believe that she was the one who had thought of these ‘facts’.”**

I won't say anything with my own mouth that could possibly trap Sophna.

**“Ideas which you come up with yourself naturally appear incredibly special even if, they are actually trivial.”**

**“Even more so with Her Excellency the Earl's personality.”**

Although there was no strength in lies, they were no longer lies to those who believed that they were the truth.

There is strength in truth.

It's a strength that's capable of making those that know the truth believe that that's the truth.

Of course, people don't act purely on their beliefs. Delicate adjustments are needed in order to connect those beliefs into action.

I placed my iPad on the table.

**“All right. Let's use this as the main point. Now then, we have to decide on a concrete story so that we can carry that out. Let's start by checking the truths. It'll be better the more truths there are.”**

Roroa, who got on top of the table and sat down, picked up the touch pen.

**“First, we know the truth about the assault incident, wan. Second, the Gongshik members who had originally entered the city were hired by the Orange Hawk Prince and they became corpses the instant they entered the city, wan. Third,**

**Miss Sophna had once attempted to kill you, Yujin. Fourth, Her Excellency the Earl and Miss Sophna cherish one another, wan. Fifth, Her Excellency the Earl cherishes you, Yujin, and bestowed upon you proof of her affection, wan. Sixth, we still possess the other remaining Gongshik mask and dagger which haven't been discovered yet, wan."**

Swish, swish, Roroa jotted down this world language's words on the screen with the touch pen.

**"Seventh,"** Roroa turned to look at Sii. **"Miss Sophna cherishes you, Sii, wan."**

**"Eh."**

Sii was startled. It seems that she didn't expect her name to be mentioned in this moment. However, instead of asking for answers, she went into thought and attempted to try and understand the meaning of those words.

I let her be and spoke.

**"Now then, let's use these facts as the groundwork. I think we can use the first, second, third, fifth, sixth, and seventh facts."**

**"Let's take out the second. If the Orange Hawk Prince is mentioned, then it'd be immediately connected to me, wan."**

**"We just have to take out the part about the Orange Hawk Prince. Wait a second, hm..... mmm ..... . ..... , ..... , ... , ..... , ..... All right. The fourth one as well. We should roughly be able to use them all."**

I stuck out my hand.

**"Pen."**

Roroo handed me the pen. I started to jot things down on the iPad.

**“I need a finger, a handle, and a trigger.”**

I already have the first thing, the second is under consideration, and there was a need to acquire a new trigger.

**“Do we really need a handle?”**

**“The chance of failing increases the more I say the keywords myself. I need someone who I can easily control and also be capable of influencing the Earl. Zia is perfectly qualified for this. We need a trigger as well. In this regard, it needs to be a person who appears completely unrelated to me, but is trustworthy…… Okay.”**

I put down the pen.

**“Roroo, Ariya, and me, the three of us will be the outing group. We’ll go to the arena first. There’s also something that I want to confirm. We’ll meet Zia, tell her about the banquet, and while I’m doing that, I’ll make things feel a bit out of place.”**

I turned to look at Alshi.

**“Alshi, you stay here. Protect Sii. Keep watch so that the pre-established faction maids don’t do anything needless, and subdue them in case of an emergency. You can do that, right?”**

**“If I, push myself.”**

**“Act at your own discretion. Also, when Zia comes to the castle for a bit in order to go to the banquet, make sure you go to her and tell her about me. Tell her that I’ve been unstable for the past couple of days. That I was branded by the Earl as proof of her affection. Once you do that, I’ll take care of the rest when I see her at the banquet later.”**

Ariya raised her hand.

**“Fair Grace, wouldn’t it be better if we just explain the situation to Miss Zia and have her join us?”**

**“No. We all share a common destiny, but Miss Zia doesn’t have, that sort of weakness.”**

Alshi told Ariya off. Ariya hesitantly turned to look at me. Her gaze appeared as if she expected me to do something with my abilities.

I pushed up my glasses.

**“I’m not omniscience and omnipotent. I’m just a human.”**

In Zia’s case, there was a weakness that I knew of, and I could probably make her join if I wanted to, but.

**“Even if I’m capable of doing so, we can’t. Zia has to act as the handle every time something like this happens. If Zia remains oblivious, it’s easier to control her, she behaves more naturally, and she has a stronger influence on the Earl.”**

Additionally, this would keep Zia safe as well.

After wrapping it up like that, I turned to look back at Roroa.

**“Roroa.”**

**“Yes?”**

**“I’m going to meet Borg. I’ll be making him the trigger.”**

**“Will you be able to make him move, wan?”**

**“I feel like it should be possible. Arrange a meeting with him. It should go without saying, but in an unofficial place.”**

There would be two problems if I were to officially request a



meeting with him.

The first problem was the fact that I wouldn't be able to know when the meeting would even take place. Sophna was going to try and kill me before the end of this month. I didn't have the time to wait.

The other remaining problem was the fact that if I were to apply to arrange a meeting with Borg, it would go through several stages and all sorts of people would end up having an eye on our meeting. And if there was a pipeline that went straight to Sophna among those onlookers? And if someone thinks that they have to pass this information on to someone else?

**“It has to appear as if Borg and I have no connections. Prepare a meeting that goes along with those conditions.”**

**“Until when?”**

**“Two days.”**

**“I'll give it a shot, wan.”**

**“Okay. Also, Miss Sii.”**

**“I'll handle Miss Sophna.”**

Sii uttered.

I nodded.

**“The banquet will determine the outcome. Prevent her from attending it.”**

**“Okay, I will. I'll consult her about the time my arm was cut off…… that it hurt back then, that it was painful…… In any case, I'll do whatever I can to hold her here.”**

Sii spoke with a rigid expression on her face while also staring at the brands on my chest.

I couldn't say a lot of things.

**“Don't do the impossible.”**

Sii nodded her head and glanced at Roroa. Roroa looked back at her and smiled.

It was then that Ariya hesitantly opened her mouth.

**“Fair Grace, is faithfully escorting you all that I have to do?”**

**“There will be times where you'll have to do things while at my side. You just have to carry those tasks out at those times. The majority of the things will be trivial except for one thing. If I go outside while in the middle of the banquet, then make sure to bring the Earl outside once as well.”**

**“Her Excellency the Earl?”**

**“Yeah. The situation might change, so I'll tell you the details then.”**

**“I understand, Fair Grace.”**

Ariya spoke.

Alshi dusted her hands and gave me a sidelong look.

**“Then it has been decided.”**

**“Yeah. We just have to reinforce the rest before the day of our outing. Although we'll probably have to adapt to some circumstances at that point…….”**

**“Will it work?”**

**“We'll make it work.”**

I gave her that answer.



And now, Alshi said this.

**“It worked out well.”**

**“Wan! It unexpectedly went really well.”**

Roroo had a refreshing smile on her face as she said that.

Like that, although Roroo was in a good mood, Ariya was silent. Alshi comforted the shoulder of that Ariya.

**“Idiot. Why are you making that, face? Things went well so you should smile as well.”**

Ariya was unable to do so. It seems that she probably required some time, but Roroo Ara Harte didn't intend to give her that time.

**“It's because she's a blockhead, wan.”**

Ariya raised her head.

**“What did you say?”**

**“I called you a blockhead, wan. Isn't your current attitude of getting agitated like that proving my point as well? In the end, the most important thing to you is yourself, wan.”**

**“It's funny how you of all people are the one saying that.”**

**“There is a big difference between me and you. Wan. I know, but you don't, wan. Although it would be more correct**

**to say that you're just feigning ignorance, wan."**

**"Stop there."**

I interrupted them.

**"Right now isn't a good time to do this. I'll prepare a place for the two of you to fight later. You can fight when you get there. Roroo, you're the adult here, so endure it."**

Roroo flapped her ears. I turned back to Ariya.

**"Ariya, you as well. I understand your feelings. I'll give you time to be gloomy later. Bear with it for at least tonight."**

**".....Yes, Fair Grace."**

Ariya lowered her head. I smiled slightly and adjusted my glasses.

**"It's really different, right?"**

I uttered those words while looking around at everyone.

**"Schemes are like that. Although plotting them is fun, there is nothing more shameful and pathetic than the execution process of those plots. Lies aren't as strong as you think they are, and people don't move as easily as you expect them to. People who you think are idiots are strangely sharp and people who you think are slow are weirdly smart. In order to overcome that, we have no other choice but to believe each other and become modest."**

**"How ironic."**

**"From now on, you will be frequently scheming and carrying them out as long as you continue to stay with me. Engrave these two things in your minds and don't forget them."**

**"Why are you saying that while looking at me, wan?"**

**“Because you’ll end up like her if you forget.”**

Roroo flapped her ears. The others nodded their heads firmly.

They should have understood. It’s because, prior to this, they already had experience with either arbitrarily or intentionally, with malice, dabbling their hands in plotting. That was most likely why they nodded their heads. Even the girl who was stabbed even though she was acting for the sake of her lover. Even the girl who had nearly lost her lover even though she was watching the person who had done her a favor.

And even the girl whose arm was cut off after being framed by some petty discord.

Among them, I stared at the last one, Sii, a bit longer before speaking.

**“We were lucky this time as well. Firstly, the fact that the Earl had thought up the hypothesis involving Alshi and Ariya through her own effort. I thought a bit more leading would have been necessary. Thanks to that, we were able to lessen our troubles.”**

It was exactly the type of story which the Earl would think up. I believed that if it was the girl who had made Zia’s teacher cut off Sii’s arm simply because Sii and I were getting along, then she would definitely come to this sort of idea.

**“The second stroke of luck was the fact that Sophna acknowledged the fact that she had tried to kill me when the Earl had asked her that question.”**

Sophna most likely thought that the Earl was referring to the incident where she had her staff pressed against my throat. In the first place, I had structured the story in a way that aimed for that. Even the act of making the Earl drunk, this was in order to delay how long it took for Sophna to realize that she was misunderstanding something. Still, I had thought that it would be a 50/50 chance, but

fortunately, the coin came up as heads.

**“The final fortune was the fact that the pieces of evidence had come out at a crucial moment.”**

**“That’s for sure. Wan. Even I didn’t expect those to appear at that moment, wan. I originally intended to have the guard discover them during a seize and search, but, wan…….”**

**“It’s fortunate that all of the pieces fell into place.”**

I planned to make a scenario like this one even if the pieces didn’t fall into place or went completely off-kilter by adapting to the situation no matter what, but it thankfully went well.

No.

To be more precise, I should say that things have gone well up to this point.

**“Now we have to go and wrap everything up.”**

Roroo flapped her ears.

**“Are you really going to go with just the two of you, wan?”**

**“That’s right, Fair Grace. Alshi and I should go with you…….”**

Although Ariya had suggested that, I shook my head.

**“There’s no need to waste lives unnecessarily.”**

**“Wan! He has a point. That’s why I’m not going either, wan.”**

Sii lamented.

**“You want to live a long life that much, but you probably won’t be able to live long.”**

**“I’m going to hope that’s not the case. That’s why I hope you guys do well.”**

**“Thank you for the support. I’ll leave it to you to guide us to the place.”**

Roroa did so while inflating her cheeks. Sii and I followed behind her.

Before long, we reached a door with two guards standing in front of it.

**“Tell those two to leave once I go in.”**

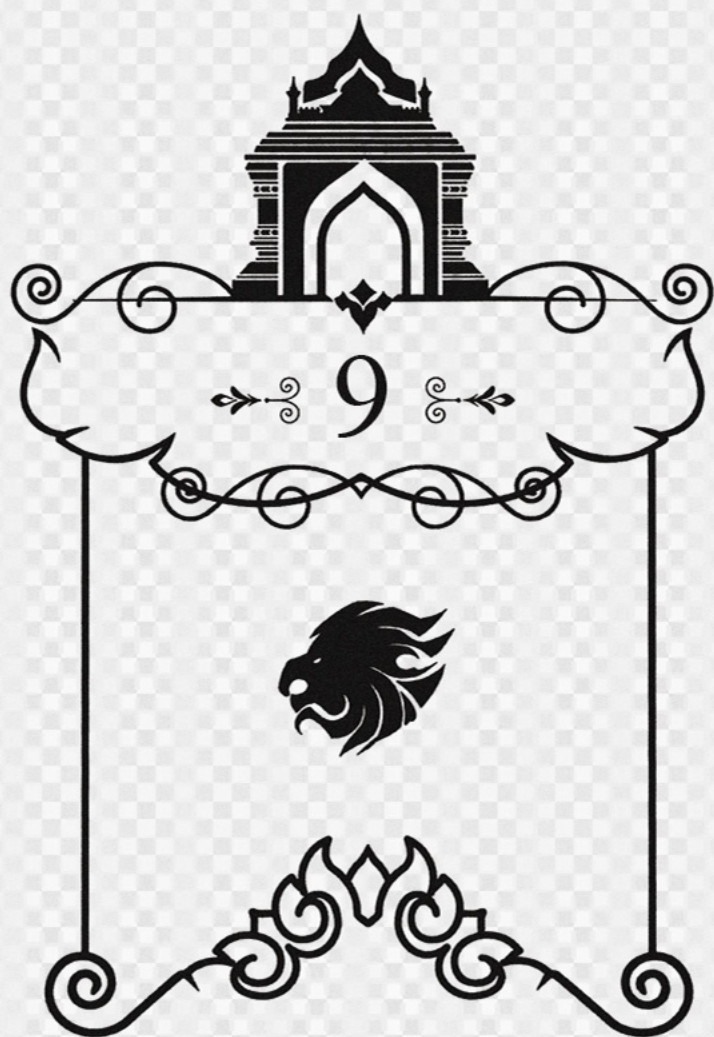
**“Aha, how could I do that, wan? They’re guards. Moreover, they’re both fellows who had bared their teeth at me, wan. It’s fine for them to stay there, wan.”**

**“Make them leave. This is an order.”**

**“.....Wan. Understood.”**

Roroa stepped forward and unlocked the door with a key. The door opened along with a clanking sound. I took out my beads and held them tightly. I took a deep breath.

Sii and I then entered the torture chamber.





Minhee swept away all of the people who bullied me on the very exact day she transferred to our school. She then dragged me outside and got upset at me. Are you nuts? You're doin' things just because they tell you to? Do you have no shame? Will you be able to become a man at this rate? That's what she said to me. When I, who was standing there vacantly and felt like his head was going to explode, heard those words.

I, I, I hit Minhee's hand away.

I cried.

I got on my knees. I cried. Just because it's me. Me. What exactly did I? Why me? I wept. Words began to pour out like an unclogged faucet spewing out water. Me. Why me, me exactly, why me exactly, why, me? For what, what reason? A lot of time was required before words that barely sounded like a language, that had a hint of logic in them could be spoken.

During that long period of time, Minhee didn't utter a single thing. That was why I was eventually able to talk.

Why, don't they consider me?

Why, don't they worry about me?

Even though they say that it's for my sake, in truth, why, why don't they care about me.



There was a smell.

It was the same smell that would always welcome you whenever you entered this room. Vomit and internal organs that couldn't be wiped clean, flesh and blood hidden in places where rags couldn't reach, these terrible smells emanated from these things as they dried and dug their way into my nose. However, there was a different fragrance mixed in this time. It was the smell of leaves and stamens, the smell of trees and the sap on the trees.

I heard the sound of a door closing behind me.

I raised my head. At the same exact time, Sophna, who was confined within a steel cage, lifted her head as well.

“What are you here for?”

Sii hesitantly took a step back. That was how penetrating Sophna's eyes were. It felt as if her falling apart earlier was a lie. It felt like I could hear her denying it herself as well. That it never happened. That that was nothing more than a momentary illusion, Sophna Radgrinkle was soundlessly making that declaration.

That was something that had definitely happened. That memory remained in my mind as well. That was most likely engraved in your eyes as clear as the crack in your pupils.

I knew this, so I talked with an attitude that clearly displayed that I was aware.

“I'm here to interrogate you.”

Sophna made a face that appeared as if she had heard a joke.

“What?”

I dragged a chair forward and sat down on it. I hung my beads around my wrist and took out a pen and notebook.

“I received an order to cooperate with the guard in order to figure out who had carried out the assault within the castle while either acting as a part of the Gongshik or pretending to be one of them. The Earl didn’t retract this order either. Roroa, the Vice-captain of the guard, transferred the task of interrogating the suspect over to me. Therefore, interrogating you, the prime suspect, would simply be following procedures and lawful as well.”

Sophna let out a ‘hah!’ sound and laughed.

“Do you think this nonsense will work? Do you truly believe so? Are you that dim-witted? Mii is a bright child. Although there is a problem with her learning capabilities, how much do you think I have taught her? Do you believe that we are incapable of resolving a misunderstanding between us?”

“It will be difficult. The mask and dagger are quite the indisputable pieces of evidence. They’re completely identical to what was discovered next to Alshi.”

“A trivial ploy like that! Were you not the one who had planted those!?”

“Did your magic not prove otherwise?”

“You most likely didn’t plant them yourself! That sort of childish trickery!”

“Then who could have planted them?”

“It was probably Ariya! Or that Roroa girl could have done it! Or…….”

Sophna paused in the middle of her sentence. She stared at Sii, who

was standing beside me, for a moment before speaking in a weak voice.

“So it was you.”

Sii didn't back off this time. She took in a deep breath.

Sophna glared at me as her body trembled.

“There is truly no other ponce like you. How could you do such a cruel thing!? Do you know what sort of severe reprimanding Sii will receive once Mii learns of this!?”

“I know.”

I spoke and wrapped my arm around Sii's shoulder.

“You obviously know as well. That's why you won't be able to accuse anyone of having planted these pieces of evidence.”

A smile which resembled a poisonous mushroom spread across Sophna's face.

“Do you truly think that? How laughable. Do you think I'll keep my mouth shut for the sake of an illegitimate child……?”

“Yup. That's right.”

Sii uttered.

Sophna paused. Sii continued to speak and didn't back down.

“Miss Sophna, is a good person.”

Silence.

“Yup~~ w-when I learned Korean, when I adjusted my way of speaking in Korean to make a character, Miss Sophna helped me…… many times, she…… she'd show me kindness. That's why, that's why I, this narrow-minded and timid girl, kept judging Miss Sophna to be

a ‘good person’. Because she cherished me.”

Sii dropped her head and ended her words with a trembling voice.

“Because I-I inherited my father’s blood.”

The Head Vassal who had protected the Earl’s bloodline for over a century bared her teeth.

“That’s a very generous interpretation. If that were the case, then,”

“I-I know.”

“What exactly do you know?”

“That Miss Sophna isn’t a ‘good person’…… rather than that, you’re ‘a person whose priorities are clear’. In other words, if you put me and Her Excellency the Earl on a scale, then Her Excellency would be first.”

Sii and the Earl were similar in this regard. They were sensitive to the direction of the affection that was directed towards them.

“I-In other words, even while knowing that I was being harassed, even though you could have easily done something about it, unlike Zia, yup, instead of doing that…… Be it the pre-established faction maids who follow Miss Sophna or anyone else, no one took my side. If anything, when my arm was going to be severed after being framed, they stood as witnesses.”

Furthermore, Sii and the Earl were different in this regard. Whenever their emotions went rampant, the Earl’s eye rims would dry up, but the edges of Sii’s eyelids would become red. Along with her red pupils, it felt like I was looking at a desert sunset.

“There’s——There’s no way that something like that would have happened without Miss Sophna’s approval. Since for Miss Sophna…… for Miss Sophna, rather than my arm, rather than something like my arm, Her Excellency’s will had precedence.”

Sophna averted her gaze as if she had been dyed in flames.

“That time…… that is not the only reason why that had happened.”

I could feel Sii tremble. I pulled her into a hug.

I stuck out a single finger while comforting her.

“What goes around comes around. I believe that you won’t cause a commotion for having been betrayed by a girl who had taken part in pressing false charges against you when you yourself had played a part in pressing false charges as well. An inflexible person who had lived for 187 years probably wouldn’t display such shameful behavior. Thus, you can say that Sii was the only one who had the qualification to hide those pieces of evidence. This is one reason.”

I extended another finger.

“Just as Sii had said, there’s a difference. If you compare Sii and the Earl, then the Earl would come first. As expected, you’ve probably given a higher priority to the Earl, the direct descendant, rather than an illegitimate child like Sii, right?”

Sophna didn’t answer.

Although I had a theory about this, I didn’t bring it up. It wasn’t the right time.

“However, if you’re more inclined towards the Earl and not Sii, then what would happen if you compared Sii’s safety with your own self-preservation? I don’t believe that you, who had protected the Earl’s bloodline for the past 187 years, could possibly place Sii in a deadly situation just for the sake of your own self-protection. Thus, you can say that Sii was the only one who had the qualification to hide those pieces of evidence.”

“Believe what you want to believe. Let us see what happens when you try to confirm it.”

Even though she had said those words provokingly, there was no strength in her voice. She must have realized this as well as she quickly supplemented her words.

“Even if that were the case…… even if you were right, do you think that something as simple as that dagger and mask would be enough to be such decisive pieces of evidence? There is no reason for me to go out of my way in order to point at Sii. Anyone could have hidden those items in my office. All I have to do is say this. If I had done it, then why would I do something as foolish as placing such obvious pieces of evidence under my desk? I’m saying this once more, but Mii is a bright child.”

“I also think that. The two of you will probably arrive at the truth. The two of you will most likely manage to work out this misunderstanding. All of this is similar to incidents that would normally happen in episodic drama series, so it will probably be resolved faster than what one might normally expect.”

I adjusted my glasses and spoke sternly.

“That is to say, if I’m not at the Earl’s side.”

Sophna froze.

I sat down comfortably with my legs crossed.

“I’ll tell you what’s going to happen after this point, Miss Head Vassal.”

I tilted my head and lowered my voice.

“The Earl isn’t going to come here.”

As if I were whispering.

“After tonight, even after she’s become sober in the morning, she will not be coming here. Be it the next day, the day after, or even a week after, she won’t come here to meet you. She won’t summon you

either.”

Sophna’s body shook.

“Do you…… do you think that you can make that happen? Do you think that you can control Mii? Do you think that you have such an ability?”

“Those are quite the strange questions. If you consider the fact that you were thrown into this prison because I was able to do so.”

“You will not be able to do so!”

Sophna shouted. I didn’t mistake this as a refutation that came from anger.

“I shouldn’t be able to. Because you have to look after the central water source. Because there are maids who are loyal to you. Because the end of the month is approaching.”

Since the city will be sent flying if she doesn’t look after the central water source, she has to relieve it beforehand, since the pre-established faction maids loyal to Sophna will do anything in order to rescue her, and more than anything else, since the Earl was going to send me back to Korea for a day because her summoning limit was going to reset. Because of these reasons, no matter how much I attempted to act behind the scenes, there was a limit to keeping Sophna confined.

Normally this would be the case.

“But you said it yourself, didn’t you? That you had come up here after having taken measures so that you don’t have to go down to the central water source for quite the long time. I can just obstruct the pre-established faction maids by utilizing the other maids and the guard. The other issue is the fact that I will be gone for a day to go on vacation, but that won’t be an issue if I just don’t go on my trip.”

“Are you saying that you won’t go back to your original world!? If



the proofs of summonings are renewed, then you will no longer be able to…….”

“When I went back to Korea for the first time, I brought back a catalyst that belongs to a person I know. I just have to make the Earl summon him next month, grab onto something that can be summoned with him, and go back like that. Why are you saying that when you already know all of this?”

Sophna’s expression changed like dried firewood. I shifted my words into embers and continued.

“I could do this. I could stand by the Earl’s side while kneeling, servicing, massaging her shoulders, and while being kicked and hit by her. By pushing her very slightly, by pulling her very slightly, I’ll prevent you from reaching her by continuously altering her direction by incremental amounts. Until the day you have to go down to the central water source, I’ll utilize all of that time. Then you’ll be lonely for quite a long period of time. Here. By yourself. Albeit, you supposedly enjoy shutting yourself in, so solitary itself should be enjoyable for you.”

I spoke.

“You’ll probably feel uneasy.”

Silence.

“I was able to move Borg, a branch manager of the Black Dragon Street, within a short period of time. The guard are in my grasp. I wonder how far I could spread my roots while you’re being held captive here. I wonder how much that uneasiness will eat away at you. Do you think that you’ll be able to endure it?”

“…… I will endure it.”

“Are you sure? If you were capable of that, then you wouldn’t have tried to kill me so hastily. You would have been patient and waited longer. You overdid yourself in order to take care of the water source

and come up for a long period of time just because you lacked that in the first place.”

Firewood always made a sound whenever they burned. I continued to toss the embers known as words on top of Sophna’s heavy breathing.

“You should know. It’s because you wanted to kill me, and because you did try to kill me that all of this was possible. In the end, it’s because your murderous intent was real, because that was an undeniable fact that all of these false charges were possible.”

If she didn’t, then it wouldn’t have been possible to reach this far.

I wouldn’t have tried to come this far either.

“It’s really late for self-introductions, but I actually don’t like stimulating things. I wouldn’t have gone this far if you didn’t set a time limit.”

“I…….”

“I know. You were probably nervous. Roroa was like that as well, but the fact that the fear of otherworlders had spread this much, although no matter how much I think about it, it’s probably because of that Ahyeon fellow…… since making sly remarks about someone I don’t really know well about would be rude, I won’t do that for the time being. So let’s skip that part for now. No matter what your reasons were, that was something which you shouldn’t have done. You’re your own biggest enemy since you were the one who had cornered yourself into this state.”

“……Are you saying that I was narrow-minded?”

“Yup. There is a total of 4 different ways for people to deal with other people. Make an exchange with them, follow them, win them over, or get rid of them. You had no intention to make a deal with me. You obviously didn’t plan to follow me. You didn’t even intend to win me over. You simply tried to get rid of me. The issue is the fact

that you weren't able to do so."

I spoke.

"Now it's your time to pay the price."

A silence fell over us.

Sophna looked back and forth between me and Sii before closing her eyes. The Earl's Head Vassal spoke with a voice that sounded like a dried leaf crumbling under a foot.

"What do you want?"

"I'm going to rehabilitate the Earl."

I rolled a bead.

"That I have potential, that there is a possibility for me to achieve this, I believe that you already know all of this. You felt anxiety because you knew this, didn't you?"

I rolled another bead.

"Help me and I'll let you out of here immediately."

Sophna didn't show any response. Sii pleaded.

"Miss Sophna, please believe in Yujin."

With a sincere voice, the Silver Lion Earl's half-sister confessed.

"I, I have a grudge towards Her Excellency the Earl. I still do. S-So..... But I won't take her life. Although I'll probably do severe things to her, it won't be too severe. Yujin will stop me from doing so. Yujin is kind. Yujin, in the end, everything that Yujin does will all be beneficial for Her Excellency the Earl."

Sophna opened her mouth slowly.

“Is that what you believe?”

“Yup, that’s what I believe. That’s what I think. That Yujin will achieve it. I believe that Yujin will change Her Excellency the Earl completely. Miss Sophna thinks so as well, right?”

“I know…… Naturally, I am aware.”

Sophna Radgrinkle spoke as if she were whispering.

“However, I am also aware that it is dangerous.”

There was a loud sound.

The noise had come from behind us.

Sii flinched and turned around. Her eyes opened widely. I stood up, pulled Sii into my arms, and followed her line of sight.

The sound was that of the iron door of the torture chamber breaking.

To be exact, it was the sound of the door being crushed completely.

**“Good day.”**

While stepping on the remains of the iron door which had changed into iron fragments, Yudia Batsand gave that greeting while wielding his spear which was wrapped in a purple glow.



**“You don’t seem very surprised.”**

Yudia let out his signature ‘guhuhu’ laugh and twirled his spear with his hand. Sii let out a shriek and shrunk back.

And I,

**“I knew it would be you.”**

And I put more strength in my arm that was wrapped around Sii.

**“Borg knew that Sophna intended to kill me before the end of this month.”**

The information must have flowed to him through Ashya. That’s why I was able to comprehend this flow of information.

**“The problem was that you knew as well. You, who didn’t care about anyone and didn’t come to the castle unless you wanted to charge the smartphone. There is no such thing as a causeless outcome. I thought about how, and through what route, you had found out about it.”**

**“How detestable. In other words, you had predicted my arrival.”**

**“Although I considered you coming here at this moment the worst-case scenario.”**

**“Guhuhu, as expected. Regardless, worst-case scenarios are destined to happen. I am here to kill you.”**

**“D-Do you think you’ll be able to get out unharmed!?”**

Sii, who had been trembling up to this point, exclaimed. He must have not been expecting that as Yudia raised a single brow.

**“Hmm? Well, would that not be the case? Yujin is not a citizen of this world. He has no civil rights and cannot receive any legal protection. Above all, this isn’t me acting arbitrarily, but a request from Sophna.”**

**“Her Excellency the Earl would……!”**

**“Additionally, even the Silver Lion Earl’s hatred would follow after. Yujin’s iPad and generator included. How could I refuse such a detestable proposition?”**

Sii froze up with a stifled look on her face. I slowly closed and opened my eyes after comforting her.

**“You most likely couldn’t refuse.”**

I also don’t believe that you had the ability to refuse.

**“You know me.”**

**“I know.”**

**“I see———then you will not get upset for some unknown reason if the arm of that maid over there were to fall off again. Since you know me, Mr. Yujin.”**

Yudia.

**“Guhuhu, that is quite the impressive gaze. This is why I say that one’s true blaze is hiding within oneself.”**

Yudia Batsand.

**“Aah, truly amazing——Yujin. In truth, I am detestably sad. How amazing would you have become if I were to let another year pass!? How thrilling would the hate from you at that time be!? Aah, Yujin! I am sincerely excited! Is there,”**

After laughing as if he were intoxicated, he pointed his spear at me.

**“Is there nothing more!?”**

From his purple eyes, a sensuous glint emitted through his monocle.

**“As the Royal Courier of the Martial Origin, there are only 10 people in the world who are capable of beating me in a test of strength. As an ascended-being, I can change the composition of my body and nullify all physical attacks. As a creator of transcendent skills, from slashes to self-protection, I can use all sorts of transcendent skills. A person of this caliber is going to kill you right now. Utilizing every violent ability which I am capable of. Now then, how,”**

With a face dyed with anticipation, Yudia Batsand shouted.

**“How do you intend to stop me!?”**

.....

**“You were making plans for after this month, were you not!? That means you are confident with your chances of survival! Do not tell me that you intended to browbeat Sophna and persuade her, win her over before I got here, and make her cancel the contract after having done so. Is this everything!? Oh, please. Do not say such detestable words! At this moment, I am truly expecting......”**

Yudia, who was being driven by his enthusiasm, closed his mouth.

Sii had stepped in front of me.

**“Is there a problem?”**

As if his enthusiasm had been dowsed, Yudia spoke in a low tone. Sii spread her arms out and clenched her teeth.

Haa, haa. Sii didn't stand down even though her shoulders were trembling while she was trying to steady her breath.

Sii.

**“You have been a hindrance since earlier. Get out of the way. I do not want to end up feeling bored as a result of**

**killing you.”**

**“Miss Sophna……!”**

Sii exclaimed.

**“I-If Yujin dies, then the false accusation on Miss Sophna would become true! Since Yujin would be dying because of your instigation! Even now, while you’re being imprisoned, if that were to happen, then Her Excellency the Earl seriously won’t……!”**

No.

That’s not it, Sii. That logic won’t work on them.

It would be great if it did, but it won’t. Sophna is,

**“……It does not matter.”**

Sophna Radgrinkle spoke.

**“It is just as this Yujin fellow had said earlier. ……In order to protect you, Sii, this lady will not say anything in regard to the pieces of evidence. As this is the case, even if Her Excellency the Earl comes to dislike this lady, despise this lady, I will be able to endure it. Any sort of harm that this lady receives is trivial.”**

Sii let out a sound.

**“But you were in pain!”**

**“Although I was in pain.”**

**“But you cried……!!”**

**“Although I cried.”**

Sophna bit her lips.



**“I can endure it. ....This lady is really good at these sorts of things.”**

The Head Vassal of the earl's household dropped her head. However, her voice was still as clear as day.

“That's right, Yujin..... I had abandoned Sii. Even though I knew that Sii was being harassed, I did not stop it. Not only did I remain as a spectator when Sii's arm was severed, but I gave my approval as well. Sii resented me and I was able to endure it now. Mii will most likely resent and despise me, due to your death. I will also endure that. Mii will one day come to terms with the fact that I had done this for her sake.”

Sii cried out.

**“Why!? Why do you hate Yujin that much.....!!”**

There was a smack.

**“Kahak.....!”**

Sii, after being hit, fell to the ground. Yudia brushed the handle of his spear with an irked look on his face.

**“I did not cut you. It would become troublesome, then. Just stay shriveled up over there.”**

**“No.....!”**

Sii pushed herself back up and clung to Yudia. Yudia let out a sigh, adjusted his monocle, and towards Sii, he, **“Yudia Batsand.”**

I,

I spoke.

**“If you lay your hand on Sii one more time, then.”**

If he did,

If he did, then,

**“What will you do?”**

Tens of thousands of ideas brushed through my head. There was only one effective measure which I could carry out.

**“I won’t do anything for you.”**

Silence.

**“I won’t move anymore. I won’t say another word. Of course, I won’t hate you either. I will spend whatever time I have left saying farewell to Sii. You probably don’t want that, Yudia Batsand. You were hoping for something, were you not?”**

Silence.

**“If you want to see me struggle for my life, then just stay there.”**

Yudia lowered his leg which he had pulled back in order to kick Sii.

**“How detestable. That is certainly a threat which you can carry out unquestionably while also being effective. You truly do know me now. However, Yujin, how do you intend to struggle?”**

I closed my eyes and opened them.

**“I came to a realization after watching you fight at the arena. In my current state, I cannot win against you no matter what personal connections I use and methods I utilize. Although I could avoid the problem for a moment if I were to hide behind the Earl, that wouldn’t be a fundamental solution. Therefore, I only have one option left to choose.”**

**“Are you referring to what I said?”**

**“Yup. Nullifying the cause. What you said. Winning Sophna over whether it be by force or persuasion. After doing so, I’ll make her cancel the contract.”**

A look of disappointment appeared on Yudia’s face.

**“As I expected. Then that means there is nothing more to,”**

**“Was the area not empty while you were on your way here?”**

Yudia tilted his head slightly.

**“Did you remove them yourself?”**

**“Yes.”**

**“Why? Did you think that I would violently kill everyone who was standing guard?”**

**“No way. I told you that I saw you fight in the arena. You don’t kill people thoughtlessly. Only when there is enough pretext would you kill them.”**

**“Indeed, it would be detestable if something bothersome were to occur. If that is the case, then why did you get rid of them if you already knew that? If you blocked the entrance with a bunch of guards, then there is a chance that I could have delayed this by a day due to it being a hindrance.”**

**“Why do you think I did?”**

**“You didn’t want to put forward fruitless strength? It could also be dealt with if I don’t kill them but paralyze them all instead. In any case, did you think that it would be over if I appeared?”**

**“To be precise, it’s the exact opposite reason.”**

I rolled a bead.

**“I, don’t trust Roroa completely yet.”**

**“Hmm?”**

**“This is the most important part. I can’t leave a part like this to a person who I can’t trust. If I order her to place some guards, then Roroa might comply with that order. However, there is a chance that she could get rid of the guards in order to betray me in this crucial moment. If this were to happen, then even I would be affected by it. I would end up using my head in order to deal with this as well. I wanted to prevent this. That’s why I told her to get rid of the guards. Regardless of whether the worst possible situation was to occur.”**

Yudia, even if you were to appear.

**“In order to soundly exhibit myself.”**

I,

**“I came here with the one and only person I trust.”**

**“Yujin…….”**

Sii became teary. I pushed up my glasses and turned to face Sophna.

I won’t give up.

**“I’ll persuade you until the very end.”**

Yudia was looking at me while puckering his lips…… He spoke.

**“Do you believe that is going to be possible?”**

**“I only do the things which I am capable of.”**

**“Do you think that doing that would have any significance? Do you think I will stop if you manage to persuade her?”**

**“People like you,” I spoke. “Have a peculiar sense of aesthetics when it comes to things like this.”**

Yudia chuckled.

**“Aha, that’s right. How impressive. Truly magnificent. However, since giving you an infinite amount of time would also be a detestable thing to do.”**

Yudia lifted Sii up. He was holding her in a bridal carry pose. Although the panicking Sii struggled, Yudia calmly received her flailing and tilted his head.

**“Let us say that this will be until I am standing before you.”**

Bead.

Processing start.

Processing end.

**“Sophna Radgrinkle.”**

Sophna was closing her mouth shut.

Step, the sound of a single footstep approached us.

**“If you want to kill me that much, then okay. However, I realized something after hearing what Sii said just now.”**

Sophna didn’t respond.

Clang. I heard the sound of the end of a spear hitting the ground.

**“Your hatred is unnatural.”**

Sophna paused.

Grrrrk. The end of the spear drew closer as it scraped the floor.

**“You aren’t biased? You aren’t stereotyping? You looked at me in my entirety? You made your judgment after seeing me? Are you sure that was the conclusion that came up after a realistic assessment?”**

Sophna raised her head.

Another footstep.

**“If you saw me, then how did you end up seeing me? What was the reason behind why you paid attention to me in the first place?”**

Sophna furrowed her brow.

The sound of a spear hitting the floor resonated once more.

**“At first, I thought it was because you had a bad experience with Ahyeon. That you were overreacting because of that trauma. But there was something more than that. It’s here right now. Think about it.”**

Sophna was looking at me.

Once more, the sound of the spear drawing closer as it scraped the floor.

**“Think.”**

Sophna was thinking.

Another footstep.

**“Around the end of last month, Abriya Mikatni had come to the castle. On that day, that fellow, Yudia said that he was going to go down to your research lab. Did you not hear something about me from him on that day?”**

Sophna jerked.

And then, silence.

**“Was it not since that moment on that you started to feel an unusual amount of threat from me? Similar to what I had done to the Earl, can you say that someone didn’t lead your train of thought towards a specific direction? Through a couple of passing comments that felt unimportant but had their first impression and firm beliefs towards me——.”**

**“Guhuhuhu.”**

I could hear the sound of laughing.

I raised my head. Yudia Batsand was laughing.

**“Aah, truly amazing!”**

I don’t want to be praised by you.

If you consider the fact that I treated you like a good person around that time, I don’t want to be praised by you even more.

**“You are truly amazing. Nevertheless, you are about to be out of time. Is there nothing more?”**

I held my beads tightly.

**“Sophna.”**

**“Even so……!!”**

In the end, Sophna Radgrinkle exclaimed spasmodically.

**“Even if I was lead……! Even if it’s prejudice……! Still……! You, you are dangerous……!!”**

Sophna started to catch her breath while lowering her head.

**“This, this is for the best. This is the best way…… For Sii, Her Excellency the Earl, I…… One day, one day you two will**

**also understand.”**

**“What are you saying is the best way!?”**

It was Sii.

Sophna gritted her teeth before grabbing the steel bars of the cage which was confining her.

“Have you not seen it already!? Do you not know already!? Have you not witnessed that boy deceive people!? Have you not seen him plot things!? How could you trust that sort of fellow!? How could you believe in him!?”

**“Miss Sophna, Miss Sophna did it first! It’s because you were the one who tried to kill Yujin first!”**

**“That is not the case! In case something like this would happen, I, I tried to kill that boy! Because he couldn’t be trusted!”**

**“Yujin, Yujin can be trusted!”**

“What are you saying is trustworthy!? Sii, what do you know about this boy!? How long has it been since you’ve met him!? I’ve, I have watched over you since the day you were born! From a distance! But, what are you saying that you know about a boy who you’ve only known for less than 2 months!? Do you know what trust is!? Do you know what belief is!? That sort of irresponsible blind faith! Blind belief! You’re simply being intoxicated by your own self that wants to believe in that boy! You should also know that that’s nothing more than arrogance…….”

**“You already know……!!”**

It felt like a thunderbolt had just struck.

Even Yudia, who was raising his spear, and Sophna, who was shouting heatedly, froze in place.



I paused as well.

Sii began to cry.

**“You already know…… that it’s arrogance…….”**

Sii.

**“Yup~…… Miss Sophna…… how is that exactly for my, for Her Excellency the Earl’s sake? Something like that, that’s just arrogance…… you’re just satisfying yourself…… What exactly are you sacrificing? What do you mean by it doesn’t matter if you’re hated? Who’s the one pretending to sacrifice things, but refuses to sacrifice a single thing that they’re trying to arrogantly hold……? Yeah, Miss Sophna.”**

Sii Garno Mikatni.

**“Something like that, you’re just drunk on yourself…….”**

Sii,

Sii…….

**“If you really care about me, if you’ve really been watching me since I was born, then…… at least once is fine, Miss Sophna, believe in me and Yujin…….”**

**“You.”**

Sophna opened her mouth. She shut it.

She opened it once more.

**“Sii, if that belief turns out wrong, how do you intend to bear that shock……?”**

**“That’s also, different…….”**

Sii continued while sniffing.

**“Yujin, Yujin said so. Since this is the most important part, he came here with the person he trusts the most…… He trusts me that much…… But, but yup, I’m different…… I’m also different to what Miss Sophna had said…… I, I don’t trust Yujin that blindly.”**

With eyes wet with tears, Sii turned to look at me.

**“Yup, in the end, I’m that person’s sibling.”**

Sii cleared her throat. It wasn’t until after she sobbed a couple more times did she call out to me.

**“Yujin.”**

**“Yes.”**

Ah.

**“Don’t betray me. Don’t abandon me. Don’t break, your promise with me. I-If you do.”**

**“Yes.”**

Aah.

**“If you do, then I’ll tear you apart with my own hands.”**

**“Yes, Miss Sii. I will die by your hands.”**

Sii was great.

Truly great.

**“Yup, Yujin…… Yujin. Yujin…….”**

When did she become this amazing?

No.

I most likely realized that she was this great of a child the instant I met her for the first time.

**“I have to admit that I underestimated you.”**

Yudia Batsand spoke.

**“Maid…… Sii. I thought that you were weak. But that does not seem to be the case. I thought that you did not have the right to possess hatred. But that seems to have been wrong. I thought that you were a piece of trash consumed by fear. But it is different. Aah——You were actually a strong and marvelous person!”**

He grinned widely and raised his spear.

**“If I kill Yujin right now, then how much would you detest me!? How much would you grow for me!? You! The Earl! The half-siblings who detest one another would combine their strength and detest me! How would it feel to be detested by both sides like that!? Aah, Sii! As expected, you are…….”**

**“Stop…….”**

Yudia paused abruptly.

It was Sophna.

**“You can…… stop now.”**

Sophna kneeled.

She raised her head.

She looked up at me and Sii.

And then at Yudia.

**“Yudia Batsand…… you may leave.”**

Yudia let out a groan. He glared at Sophna while grabbing his chest as if he had been struck by a poisoned arrow. However, shortly after, he set Sii down and patted her head. Sii dodged his hand in disgust, but Yudia didn't seem to mind as he put his spear away. He then turned around.

**“I will see you next time.”**

Similar to when he had arrived, Yudia left the prison in an instant.



I cried for a truly long period of time in front of Minhee. It wasn't until my head completely felt as if it were in a vacuum did Minhee speak.

You have a good vocal range, boy.

Minhee had a rough but smart side to her. She most likely realized that my cries weren't directed towards her the instant she heard them. However, she didn't point that out. She simply received my cries calmly.

And she then spoke.

So are ya satisfied?

She then spoke.

I won't say anythin' if you're satisfied. But that isn't the case, is it? Aren't you hurtin'? The fact that you're chantin' 'I want to die, I want to die' is written all over your face, so how do you expect me to leave ya alone? Right? You said that I didn't show you consideration? You're right. That's possible. But it couldn't be helped because you looked like you were in so much pain. I'm not capable of doin' nothin'. It's in my nature, so I'd be thankful if you understood.

She then spoke.

I'm sorry.

I'm always like this cause my head is bad. I'd be grateful if you understood. But my desire to help you is sincere. Now that I think about it, you look like you're smart. Let's do this.

Teach me how to help you.

I looked up at Minhee blankly. With slightly red cheeks, Minhee was averting her gaze while rubbing her ear. She then let out a sigh, took off my glasses, and wiped the corners of my eyes with her necktie.

Let's go. I'll buy ya somethin' tasty.

My vision which was clear for a moment became blurry once more. Minhee waited for me while allowing her necktie to get drenched as I cried again.



Sii gnashed her teeth while staring at the direction of the iron door.

“That person…….”

“Later.”

I placed my hand on Sii's shoulder and comforted her.

“Next time for sure…… So for now. Do you understand?”

“Yup~~…… That's going to be included in your promises towards me now.”

“Of course.”

I gave her a kiss on the forehead as I said that.

I turned back to face Sophna.

“Sophna.”

Sophna raised her head. Her light green eyes were filled with pain.

“You…… I cannot trust you completely.”

“I know.”

I responded.

“Trust isn’t something that piles up in a single moment and it shouldn’t.”

“Is that what you think? Of course that is. That should be obvious since you had stated that you couldn’t trust Roroa…….”

“Mm…… that’s a bit different. I believe that not allowing someone to have even a single opportunity to betray you is another way to trust them. That means I wouldn’t have to take any risks.”

Sophna smiled bitterly.

“That is quite, unfortunately, a regrettable way to trust someone. Does that even work?”

“There are more times where it doesn’t work. Like how you had shut yourself in your room.”

Sophna’s eyes jolted like the liquid within a witch’s pot.

“You think that you were unable to do anything when the Mage Tower did that, right? That’s probably why you felt responsible, felt guilty for the Earl’s change, blamed yourself, and finally shut yourself in your room.”

“Am I not allowed to……?”

The exclusive mage of the Earl’s household spoke with a sorrowful voice.

“I have lived for quite a long period of time. During that time, that was the first time I had failed as horribly as that. That was most likely



why it was unbearably painful. The fact that I am afraid that I may fail again, Yujin. Do you think that it is bad that I look forward to a tomorrow that will not be bad more than a tomorrow that might be better?”

“I believe that, as a human, that is something that may happen, and that it’s a natural occurrence.”

I stated and then continued.

“Nevertheless, is this current situation the tomorrow which you had hoped for in the past?”

And do you not know the number of otherworlders which the Earl had played around with and killed? I did not ask this. I did not tell her that there was a death during this very month as well. I didn’t ask her whether she truly believed that this was a tomorrow that wasn’t bad, that this was a part of her maintaining the norm. One day, we’ll have to quibble about the responsibility for this to this person, to Zia, and more than anyone else, to the Earl.

Not yet.

“You know it yourself as well, don’t you? That it’s ineffective. That nothing will get solved like this. It’s because you knew that you were so anxious while shutting yourself in, isn’t it?”

That’s why you fell for the thought induction of a person like Yudia and poured all of your anxiety onto me. Can you deny this?”

Sophna was unable to do so.

I finished up my speech.

“You always complained about the Earl’s learning ability, right? I’m going to believe that you’ll verify your own learning ability.”

Sophna tilted her head like a zelkova tree branch with too many leaves on it.

I waited. Like waiting for dead leaves to fall and branches to come up once more. This was most likely possible. Although Sophna had definitely lived for a long period of time and was very opinionated, on the other hand, she was a person who was capable of learning English in order to simply read a book that was written in English. There was always a possibility for people who were capable of learning something.

The stillness continued to flow. I adjusted my glasses with my head raised.

It was at that moment.

“Mm…… Yujin.”

“Yes, Miss Sii?”

Once I turned around, I saw that Sii was looking at me while fiddling with her fingers.

“Ah, mm…… Y-Yujin, I’m sorry.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“You know, earlier, that…… I’ll kill you if you betray me…… mm~~ Y-You’re not mad, right?”

Sii’s lips wriggled about as she kept throwing glances at me.

Mm.

“Eh…… Yujin?”

I only released her from the hug until after I had patted her back for a long time.

“There was some dust on your hair.”

“Yujin, occasionally gives some really lame excuses…….”

“It wasn’t an excuse. And it’s fine. If anything, I’m glad that you had told me that.”

“I-Is that so?”

“Yes, Miss Sii. In regard to why I told you that I’m glad, I’ll leave that as homework for you.”

“Mm~~ I already know the reason. It’s because Yujin is a masochist.”

She was wrong.

“Let’s bring this night to a close.”

I placed my hand on Sii’s shoulder and walked towards the prison cell with her.

“Eh, Yujin?”

Sii, who wound up standing in front of the prison cell after being dragged here by me, had a panicked expression on her face.

I adjusted my glasses.

“Sophna Radgrinkle.”

Sophna raised her head.

“I want to rehabilitate the Silver Lion Earl. There are many reasons as to why I wish to do this, but saying it like this would most likely be easier for you to understand. I want to help Sii, the Earl’s half-sister, by improving the unfair treatment which she has been receiving.”

I grabbed Sii’s shoulder and put some strength into my hand.

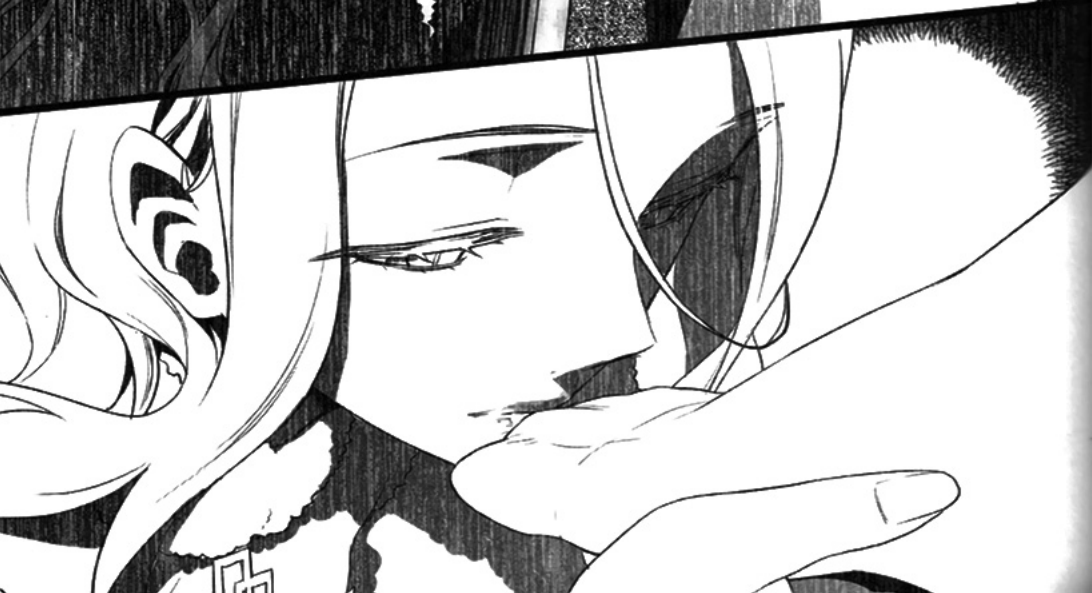
“By standing right next to me, and not below, work together with me so that we can do our utmost in order to help Sii.”

Sophna stretched her arm out from her cell.

Sii flinched and panicked the next moment, but she didn't back away. Even while her cheeks were dyed red and her body trembled, she didn't move from her spot.

Thus, Sophna was able to take off Sii's shoe with ease.

With the cell bars between them, the Head Vassal of the Earl's household pressed her lips against the foot of an illegitimate child.



The long day finally came to an end.

Approximately 2 months after my first time being summoned here  
——I was successfully able to place the entire Silver Lion Earl castle  
under my influence.



I lived a life where I had received quite the amount of love. Although the majority of that love were aimless bullets of self-love, despite that, there was actual love mixed in as well.

It was a love that wasn't imposed. Thus, it was a love which I could accept.

Similar to what Our Lord would give out to us, it was a true love which garnered respect and consideration.

My Lord.

My Goddess.

My Minhee.

Similar to how roamers that wander the wilderness are enveloped by their lamps, I was enveloped by that love. Even after the fire had gone out, the embers still remained within me.

I received love. Truly, I lived while fiercely receiving love.

Like so, once I had opened my eyes, that world, and even this other world, were places that were abundant with love, and I have been receiving quite the amount of undeserved love even now.

I wanted to repay that love.

That was most likely not going to be an easy task.

I didn't have the same capabilities which Minhee had. No matter how much I tried to follow in her footsteps, I wasn't as bright, hot, or beautiful as Minhee. If Minhee could control fire, then all I could leave behind were festered remains. In the end, I knew that I wasn't



too far apart from the type of people who shoved their own self-love forward and called it love.

Occasionally, that doubt would become a type of frost and assault me. At that time, in the hospital room, the cries of starlings, the experience I had of being buried underneath ashes made me cower. Am I doing things properly right now? Am I doing my utmost to, at the very least, be like Minhee, be similar to Minhee?

I placed my hand on my chest while feeling the coldness. While tasting the bitter and acrid taste of ash, I buried it in my chest. Minhee. My Goddess. My love. My ember. Are you there? Is the love that I had poured for you here? Is your vestige over there in the place that I am heading?

For your sake.



The next day arrived.

**“Uu, my head…… It’s morning and I’m already dying……. For a female knight, she snores so much…….”**

The Earl made her way out of her bedroom while stumbling. She must have tossed and turned during her sleep as her already lion mane-like hair was now even more of a complete mess. It seems she had a severe headache as she was narrowing her eyes while holding her head.

Those eyes shot open the instant they adjusted to the sunlight.

“.....What is this?”

Even for her, this was a situation where she could only ask that. Because the instant she had woken up and come out of her room, Sophna and I were kneeling side by side in front of her.

“Eh..... Uh. No, wait, this is normal for Yujin, but Sophna? What is this?”

The Earl was now opening her eyes in complete surprise.

Sophna shook her head respectfully.

“I apologize.”

“Uh.....”

“This old lady was wrong. Mii, this grandmother made a mistake..... I had become senile after having lived for so long. Something like this will not happen again. I will also do my best to get along with Yujin.”

The Earl kept opening and closing her mouth. She then turned to look at me.

I spoke up first.

“I made up with her.”

The Earl twitched.

“She said that she wanted to beg you for forgiveness. That’s why I brought her here. Sorry. This is something that I had done arbitrarily, so if you want to denounce someone, then I would appreciate it if you punished only me.”

“No, Mii. This old lady was obstinate. Because I felt bad, because I was sorry..... because I realized I was being narrow-mindedly stubborn..... I am sorry, Mii.....”

Sophna looked up at the Earl while shedding tears.

“Can you not forgive me this one time……?”

The Earl’s face lit up.

“Hmm.”

She grinned widely.

“Haaamng~! Of course!”

The Earl shot forward and rushed towards Sophna. Like a cat that had embraced a silvertine, she hugged Sophna and rolled around.

“Ah ha ha ha! Yes! Yeess! I shall forgive youuu! It’s Sophna, after all! It’s Sophna who had changed my diapers!”

“I am sorry.”

Sophna held the Earl tightly and said that.

“It’s all right~! Mhm mhm, it’s fine if you’ve repented! It’ll all be fine if you listen to me well from now on!”

“I am truly sorry.”

“I said it’s okay~! Ah hah hah hah ha! Sophna! Grandma! My Head Vassal!”

“Truly, I am truly sorry……. Mii. I apologize to you…….”

Even before. Even now.

And even from now on.

“I am truly sorry…….”

Sophna apologized to the Earl over and over again while sobbing.

I adjusted my glasses, and watched them.



Like that, the incident ended on a good note. The Earl was satisfied, and as long as the Earl was satisfied, Zia was satisfied as well.

Despite that, I was busy trying to take care of the aftermath for a while. Through Sophna, while I was finally able to reach my hand out towards the places in the castle which I couldn't before, I also had secret meetings with Borg. Eventually, similar to how I had done so in the previous month, once the end of February had arrived, I went on a trip back to Korea.

There will most likely be a day where I will be able to talk about this.

February, which was filled with ups and down, ended like that.

On the first day of March, Lady Dansoomyo arrived.



The girl was as red as the blood of a saint.

Her pupils were red, the frames of her glasses were red, her lips were red, and even the hat she was wearing and the attire she had on were all red as well. It wasn't a fierce scarlet color like Sii's eyes. A red glow that was completely calm, but would occasionally surge without a sound. Like a china doll with holes pierced into its eyes which also had a lit candle made from sperm oil inside of it, she possessed a red which had both elegance and dignity.

**“The dilemmas which the people from my household face can be narrowed down to a single thing.”**

She was tall. One head taller than me. Roughly between 180 and 190 centimeters. If you included the crown of her hat, then she easily reached over 2 meters. Her eyebrows were thick, the shape of her eyes was slightly slanted downwards so, along with her gentle appearance, the tattoo of an ember near her left eye left a lasting impression.

**“What do you have to do in order to not die?”**

While stretching out her fingers that had bright red nail polish on them, her 10 slender fingers which were long like the legs of a spider, she spoke.

**“There is an answer to this question. And there also exists a process which must naturally be gone through in order to obtain that answer. The first step which you have to go through is the disambiguation of the question. In other words, you have to know with certainty what you're pursuing and what obstacles are going to be in your path in the process of your pursuit. You have to accurately grasp the meaning behind those obstacles. Thus, if you wish to avoid death, then you must find out what exactly death is.”**

She turned her head. The light shining on her glasses hid her pupils which were underneath them.

**“Will you die if you're cut? Will you die if you're stabbed? Will you die if you're hit? How much can be cut? How do you have to be stabbed? If you're hit by what? A sword? A spear?”**

**A hammer? Now then, there's a single healthy, sound, and happy person here. They have a partner, a child, and friends. Let's take everything away from them and make them into a natural individual. Let's experiment on them by getting rid of every quantitative variable they have and turning them into a completely bare person. Let's harm them. It doesn't matter what tools or means you use. If harm continues to pile up like that, then the person will one day reach their demise. Yup. People, die after being harmed for a while. Like so, we are able to understand the trigger for death once more."**

She turned her head back and fixed her glasses.

**"And another question is formed. How much harm must a person experience before they die?"**

She clasped her hands behind her back.

**"Of course, its existence being obvious is an individual difference. However, if you increase the number of samples, then the chance of it being possible becomes standardized. Algebra. The strength of statistics. For that sake, I wound up defining several new concepts. First, refer to 'harm' as 'damage'. First, in order to arithmetically express the degree to which a person nears death after being 'damaged', I introduced the concept of 'HP', which is another term for 'life force'. First, death is basically the state of having received damage to the point of being no longer able to maintain yourself, in other words, you can say that they are in a state where their  $HP=0$ . Through this, I'm able to approach death from a completely arithmetical standpoint. Even I have to admit that my own idea is innovative."**

Uhihi, she chuckled while curling her lips like a cat.

**"A girl in her 20s. Average HP is 10. Knife. Stabbing with one's entire strength does 5 damage, followed by a**

**continuous 1~2 damage from bleeding. A man in his 30s. Average HP is 15. Hammer and nail. Each nail does 1 damage and 1 continuous damage. Oh right, regardless of the weapon and the target, if their vital points are struck, then the critical hits are judged in their own separate way. Additional damage. There's a graph and a rulebook here, so use them as a reference."**

She smiled shyly as she gave us a sidelong glance.

**"I apologize for bringing this up the moment we meet, but I just wanted to tell you about this as soon as possible. Silver Lion, you're smart so you should be able to understand immediately, right? Ehehe, Silver Lion. You know....."**

After pushing forward two girls with leashes around their necks, she brought out a fret saw and a hammer.

**"Let's, play with this."**

Her sunset-colored eyes emitted a boundlessly cozy glint.



[Short Story]  
The Story of the Green Mage



## 1. Stream that flows to a high place

A long time ago, the territory where this city is currently standing was once similar to that of a checkerboard with cracks all over it.

The number of crevices would occasionally increase, become wider, grow deeper, and lava would spew out from them. Naturally, non-wicked beings could not inhabit this area, and as a long period of time flowed by, the mineral resources in this region continued to be created by the earth and simply piled up.

There were a lot of people who wanted to harvest these resources. However, they had no way of doing so. Ever since one of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches' first princes and one of the prominent figures among the Sky Wizards had alternately attempted to pioneer the land with only humiliating results in return, there wasn't a single person who attempted to approach it.

Humans were like that.

There was a certain water dragon. Due to the fact that she had a name which only dragons could pronounce, as all dragons do, all other beings would call her by what her name meant. 'Stream that flows to a high place.' As this was the meaning of the water dragon's name, it was her essence.

The water dragon, Stream that flows to a high place, was an abandoned child. As there was no race that looked after their descendants more than dragons, and there weren't a lot of races that didn't respect their elders, she was an existence that was especially unable to receive that sort of care, but despite that, she was an existence that wandered around searching for her own roots.

The term 'flows to a high place' referred to the fact that she was

searching for her roots. As this was a task which required labor, it was thus a task with limitations. In the end, Stream that flows to a high place was unable to find her parents. She was unable to find out who had given birth to her and why she had been abandoned.

Instead, she became exhausted. Even if she didn't, due to the fact that she had used the majority of her long life as a dragon trying to achieve a goal which could not be accomplished, her scales had become as worn out as the oldest living mountain dragon's and her horn had become more rusted than a sealed dragon's that had inhabited a coast. She threw everything aside and searched for a place where she could retire and decided that she would do so in the land of fissures which no one approached. Although there were a couple of wicked beings that didn't mind the flame and lava living there, they weren't a match for her.

Stream that flows to a high place situated herself in a lake of lava which was inside an empty cave within the land. The boiling lava turned into clean fresh water, and the quaking earth stopped trembling. Once Dragon Walls surged upwards around the cave as if they were enclosing it, the land finally stabilized. The world was no longer able to claim ownership of this land and wicked beings were unable to set foot here.

This wasn't the case for humans.

At that point, the first prince who was humiliated before was reigning over the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches since the throne had been passed down to him. Furthermore, although his old vigor was gone, his craftiness increased by quite the amount instead. As stealing land which dragons had stabilized was a common thing which humans did, it was a certain method to expand land for humans.

An official pioneering decree was given. It was a decree which declared that the human who killed the dragon will, without question, be given a status and ownership of that land. A new Palatinate. A new earl title. The rewards were appealing. Along with the unlicensed

pioneers within the vicinity, a countless number of adventurers headed towards the land as well. After a long assault, they were able to penetrate the Dragon Walls and establish a camp on top of the cave.

There was a woman who was especially prominent.

## 2. Golden Lion Earl

There was a girl with messy, blonde hair that emitted a radiant glow who was referred to as 'Golden Lion' because she was gifted in both martial arts and magic. Although she was a lascivious woman and had a tendency of being cruel, her heart was so clean that it was nearly transparent and that was what evoked a charm which attracted others.

The Golden Lion had seven vassals. They were all no different to being the Golden Lion's lovers, but among those girls, a green-haired mage girl, Sophna Radgrinkle, was especially infatuated with the Golden Lion.

"Please protect your chastity."

Sophna had said this.

"Me. Me alone. Please love me and me alone."

Sophna requested this.

"When the sun rises, please wake up looking at me. When the wind blows, please look at me and smile. When it rains, please look at me and kiss me. When twilight approaches, please fall asleep while looking at me. I beg of you, my master. My soul. My young queen. Me, only me, please devote your life to me alone."

Sophna implored this.

The Golden Lion embraced Sophna as if she were lovely and rubbed her cheeks. She then had sexual relations with her other vassals while in front of Sophna.

The Golden Lion was gifted at making the people who loved her miserable.

If she didn't also have the ability to make her enemies even more miserable than that, then she probably wouldn't have lived long.

Although there were a lot of brave soldiers, in the end, it was the Golden Lion who had obtained the honor of being the dragon slayer after a long battle. Stream that flows to a high place sank into the lake. The Golden Lion received supremacy and the exploitation right over the land and became the founder of the earl family.

She named her land after her nickname and called it the Lion Palatinate. After she had named her household the House of the Lion Earl, she quickly got married to one of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches' third princes.

It was a natural course of events. As long as she had her own household, she had to have a child. However, the Golden Lion's vassals were all the same gender. As the spell that allowed people of the same gender to have kids was rare and she had to form a connection with a man anyway, she figured that she might as well get into a matrimonial relationship with the royal family while she was at it. The third prince of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branches was the best choice for various reasons.

Thus her vassals understood. Excluding Sophna.

The Golden Lion gave that Sophna the duty of midwife.

The fact that she had to watch the person she loves give birth to the child of another person, the fact that she had to personally receive that child in her own hands as well, even Sophna herself didn't know what sort of harm these things had caused her mind.

"How adorable."

Only the Golden Lion knew exactly.

"With what belief are you crying in such an adorable manner like that?"

The Golden Lion grinned widely as she wiped the corners of Sophna's eyes with the back of her hand.

“Ever since the first time I met you, you have been cute to no end.”

The Golden Lion brought the back of her hand towards her mouth and licked Sophna's tears which had been smeared on it. It tasted like morning dew.

A glow returned to the face of the Golden Lion who had become thin due to the fatigue of childbirth.

“My cute and adorable Radgrinkle.”

Sophna didn't give a response and simply cried.

### 3. Meteor Dagger Prince

The third prince who had become the Golden Lion's 'wife' was known as Meteor Dagger. With assistance from the various transcendent movement spells, which only people of the royal family could use, the strength with which his daggers flew befitted his title.

The fact that the prince polished daggers which belonged to shadow troops was somewhat bizarre. Of course, the Meteor Dagger Prince had a perfectly rational reason for this.

The Meteor Dagger Prince understood that he was the third prince. This meant that he knew that no matter what happens, he would never be able to sit on the throne and his children would never be acknowledged by the royal family due to a physical reason.

This was a reality which anyone who was a third prince would know. However, the Meteor Dagger Prince made a choice which was uncommon among third princes. Instead of living comfortably in the Palace of the Twelve Earthly Branches, he chose to pioneer his life outside.

He wanted to take twelve steps away from his place of rest. As his dagger was a good weapon to subdue any sort of threat that may exist around him, it was thus the first step which the prince had to grow proficient in.

You could say that marrying the lord of a new Palatinate was the second step. Taking over the reins of the Palatinate was step three, subduing the surrounding regions was step four, and ensuring internal stability was step five. It was supposed to have proceeded like this.

The Meteor Dagger Prince was stuck on step two.

The earl treated the prince like a surrogate father. She didn't give

him even the slightest amount of authority nor did she care for his dignity. The Meteor Dagger Prince, although he was the earl's husband, his situation was no better than the two princes who were being reared in the Palace of the Twelve Earthly Kingdom in order to secure royal offsprings.

The Meteor Dagger Prince knew this as well. It was as if she believed that the only difference which her husband and the seven vassals she'd normally have around was the fact that he had two more fingers and a male genitalia. The Meteor Dagger Prince wanted to believe that the Golden Lion simply didn't know the value of the former.

"Golden Lion," the Meteor Dagger Prince spoke in a feeble tone that befitted his appearance. "I can do a lot more for this land."

The Golden Lion wasn't interested in that.

"I can do much more for this Palatinate which you had established."

The Golden Lion wasn't interested in that either.

"Should I bring in aid from the royal family? I am the third prince. Although I am no longer a member of the family, I can establish at least that much of a connection. Should I scout talented individuals through the conferral of decorations? I have many connections with the Twelve Worldly Factions as well. So, Golden Lion, please allow me, your husband, the father of your children to have more authority."

The Golden Lion wasn't interested in anything.

The Golden Lion Earl grinned.

"Shut up and keep moving your hips."

The Meteor Dagger Prince lowered his head. All twelve of his clenched fingers shook.



Coming to the conclusion that the Golden Lion Earl was a savage lecher was an excessively meager evaluation. She simply placed playing around with her new toy, also known as her 'husband', higher than the development of her territory and household. As this was severely decadent, it was thus very noble-like as well.

It was also something which the Meteor Dagger Prince could not endure.

“I didn’t come here in order to do this.”

“This fair lady came here to do this.”

Within the office, the Golden Lion blocked the prince’s complaint with her hand.

“I married you because I wanted to do something a bit more different.”

“This fair lady married you in order to do this.”

Within the city, the Golden Lion blocked the prince’s lament by making him hold their child.

“There are more things, which I wish to do with you.”

“There are more things, which this fair lady wishes to make you do.”

Within the bedroom, the Golden Lion blocked the prince’s appeal by switching positions.

The Meteor Dagger Prince gave up. He had given up on trying to persuade the Golden Lion. He searched for other methods and executed them. He requested help from his brothers back in the Palace of the Twelve Earthly Branches. He called together the factions which he had already created. He increased his time with his children. He reached his hand out towards the vassals who were tired of the Golden Lion Earl.

Like that, the Meteor Dagger Prince started to gather arrowheads in the Water Dragon City in order to kill the Golden Lion Earl.

The Violet Swamp, Yudia Batsand, was one of those arrowheads.

#### 4. Violet Swamp

Yudia Batsand was one of the Martial Origin's 22nd generation disciples. As he was a brilliant mind who had manifested a transcendent skill before the age of 10, he was a genius that had succeeded in ascending before the age of 40. As he was a bad seed that did not place value on anything other than the completion of his martial arts, he was an eccentric person who had found the method of doing so through hatred.

It was a simple anecdote. Yudia committed a lot of wicked deeds for the sake of the people he was close with and created a lot of enemies. He then lost everyone that was close to him due to those people having their revenge.

The lesson you could get from this anecdote was 'you reap what you sow'. However, you would have no other choice but to arrive at a different conclusion if you knew the truth.

Yudia didn't commit wicked deeds for the sake of those he was close to, but simply because he needed people that hated him. Even though he knew that they were plotting their revenge and he had the ability to stop them, he left them alone because he required people to hate.

Yudia was the very culprit behind thoroughly planning and executing these plans.

Therefore, the real moral of the story is, in principle, don't drag people like Yudia into your own personal affairs.

Despite that, the reason why the Meteor Dagger Prince had called for Yudia was due to his relationship with the mage that was acting as the Golden Lion Earl's midwife, Sophna.

Yudia and Sophna were from the same region. They were also the same age. As they were childhood friends, before Sophna met the

Golden Lion, they were companions that adventured together.

They were also ex-lovers.

Even someone like Yudia is capable of having a romantic relationship. Was.

As it was the greatest part of love, it was the cruelest as well.

The Meteor Dagger Prince wanted to rely on that.

## 5. Violet Swamp and Yellow-Green Grass

The Meteor Dagger Prince spoke.

“I am going to get rid of the Golden Lion Earl.”

Yudia Batsand tilted his head.

“Guhuhuhu.” Yudia laughed before continuing. “Well, good luck with that. I shall see how far your hatred takes you.”

After saying only those words, Yudia stood up and left. He then went to meet his ex-lover.

Sophna, who was exhausted from the Golden Lion’s affection-filled mistreatment, had no idea what sort of reaction she should show in response to her ex-lover’s sudden appearance. Yudia gave Sophna an answer to her dilemma.

“Long time no see Yellow-Green Grass. It has been a while since we last had sex. How about it?”

Sophna struck Yudia’s cheek. Yudia grabbed her wrist, pushed her against the wall, and pressed his lips against hers. Sophna desperately resisted, struggled, and tried to bite Yudia’s tongue off, but she only succeeded at the last part.

However, Yudia was an ascended being. Yudia’s torn tongue turned into a type of poison and spread throughout Sophna’s body. Sophna fell to her knees after the poison started to affect her and she then fell over just like that as she could no longer move even a single finger.

“I know.”

Yudia spoke while licking Sophna’s cheek with his regenerated tongue.

“I heard that you have been sleeping with a woman.”

His purplish tongue brushed against Sophna’s eyelid.

“That is quite like you.”

After Yudia Batsand had his fill with licking Sophna’s eye, he drew his tongue back and spoke.

“You put your all into fruitless things. Is that your style? Or is it just that your very existence in itself has properties which attract those sorts of things together?”

Sophna was still paralyzed. After mixing an aphrodisiac effect with his saliva, Yudia started to lick her ear this time. He bit her earlobe, wet the back of her ear, and pushed his tongue into her ear.

Yudia’s aphrodisiac had a special effect. Normal aphrodisiacs would make the body sensitive and itchy, but Yudia’s aphrodisiac transformed any part of the body that is touched into an erogenous zone. That’s why Sophna spasmed when Yudia dug his slender finger into her wet ear.

“This is foreplay.”

Each time his finger wiggled around inside of her ear which was wet with saliva, a splashing sound would resonate throughout Sophna’s ear.

“For starters, I will send you over once.”

It didn’t take long.

“Now then, I will violate you.”

Yudia Batsand did so.

By the time Sophna was released from her paralysis, Yudia had already put his clothes back on.

“How was it?”

His purple eyes sparkled.

“Even though you had become a lesbian, you were embraced by a man. By force and on top of your own bed at that. While you were unable to budge even a single finger, you were raped by your ex-lover. Aah, Sophna, Sophna! How was it? What do you think about this!? Am I!?”

Yudia embraced Sophna and questioned her.

“Am I not detestable!?”

Sophna answered after a long silence.

“I do not detest you.”

Like a dew rolling down the side of a leaf, a tear dropped down from her yellowish-green eyes.

“You are simply pathetic.”

Sophna Radgrinkle sobbed as she said one final line.

“You are pitiable.”

Yudia looked at Sophna and realized that she was telling the truth.

A long time.

Because Yudia believed that he was an existence that was missing something, because he was like this even before meeting Sophna for the first time, in other words, the mentality of the existence known as Yudia, because his essence had already been completed a long time ago, because no matter what happened afterward, nothing could affect his essence, because no matter how strong the wind blew, a swamp would not stir, He should have just taken those words as if

they were nothing.

Yudia gripped his chest.

He felt a ripple.



## 6. Meteor Dagger and Violet Swamp

Yudia Batsand spoke.

“You said that you were going to get rid of the Golden Lion Earl, correct?”

The Meteor Dagger Prince tilted his head.

“Hmm, I woonder.” He had the right to act at least this petulant. “You told me to handle it myself with my hatred. Why are you suddenly interested?”

“Yellow-Green Grass refused me.”

That was a possibility which he had considered ever since he invited Yudia Batsand here. The possibility that Sophna would refuse Yudia, and due to that, Yudia would fully cooperate with him. However, he didn't expect things to actually play out like this. The Meteor Dagger Prince, who was never able to get anything done properly ever since he met the Golden Lion Earl, truly felt omnipotent for the first time in a long while.

“I raped Yellow-Green Grass. I did so in her room after paralyzing her with my poison and melting her sufficiently with my aphrodisiac. Despite that, Yellow-Green Grass denied me. Instead of hate, she gave me sympathy…….”

“No, it's fine. You do not have to say anything more.”

The Meteor Dagger Prince waved his hand as he felt as if that omnipotent feeling of his was going to go flying off. Yudia drank a single gulp of alcohol and adjusted his monocle.

“How detestable. I will kill the Golden Lion Earl.”

“All right. I will give you the exact method and time…….”

“I will poison the central water source.”

The Meteor Dagger Prince froze.

“The central water source?”

“Yes. I plan to go right this instant.”

Yudia was speaking with a depressed tone.

The Meteor Dagger Prince did his best to respond as calmly as possible.

“Then the people will die.”

“Let them die.”

“This is an official Palatinate. If that sort of terrorist attack were to happen, then the kingdom won’t sit back and just watch. The Martial Origin will most likely expel you as well. You will receive the Mark of the Thirteenth and be hunted to death.”

“Then so be it.”

It was then that the Meteor Dagger Prince grasped what sort of situation he was in.

“Are you some damn 12-year-old!? You’re giving yourself up to despair just because you got dumped……!?”

The prince’s words came to an abrupt halt because his tongue had stopped moving. His body wouldn’t budge either. Like how most people are when they are paralyzed by a type of poison, he wasn’t able to move a lot of things.

“Then go ahead and detest me.”

Yudia Batsand, whose voice sounded depressed till the very end,

turned around. The Meteor Dagger Prince could only watch helplessly as Yudia left the room.

## 7. Golden Lion and Meteor Dagger

There was a limit to Yudia's poison. You could say that it was the limit which humanity had in the world of acids. Proof of royalty could not be harmed by the power of this world's mankind. That was a pledge. Since his roots lie within this world's mankind, Yudia couldn't go against this even if he had ascended.

Although reciting a detoxification spell while only moving one's sixth fingers took a long period of time, it wasn't impossible. The Meteor Dagger Prince had to consider what was going to happen afterward. As expected, bringing Yudia into this was a mistake and now this mistake was trying to swallow him whole.

The Meteor Dagger Prince had no other choice but to come to a single conclusion.

“So you came to this fair lady?”

The Golden Lion Earl was proud of the fact that she was unusual. Even this dauntless woman was quite surprised by the situation.

The Meteor Dagger Prince lamented.

“I will accept any punishment.”

“Of course you will. Let's see, the Seven Pillars…… Damn it, why isn't everyone here?”

“I spread them out so that it would be easier to assassinate you.”

“Your punishment will be very severe. For now, let us go stop that idiot.”

The Golden Lion gathered whatever vassals she could. The Golden Lion Earl went down to the basement of the central tower with

Sophna Radgrinkle, Arabet Orgit, and the Meteor Dagger Prince in tow.

The magic research lab on the 3rd-floor basement of the central tower used together by Martha Naricpictor, Shuran Shyobel, and Sophna Radgrinkle had already fallen into ruin. The magic traps and guardians that were set up had become piles of junk as well. However, they were destroyed after having at least done their jobs.

The Golden Lion, Sophna, Arabet, and the Meteor Dagger Prince went further below the 4th-floor basement of the central tower and caught up to Yudia Batsand right in front of the central water source. He was tired and had already lost one of his spare lives.

“Yellow-Green Grass!” Yudia rejoiced. “Did you chase after me?”

Sophna didn’t want to say anything that could possibly make Yudia happy.

“I followed Her Lordship here.”

Yudia didn’t say anything more. Instead, he pointed his spear at the Golden Lion Earl.

The instant the purple arrow, which had shot out from the tip of his spear, was knocked away by Arabet Orgit’s glowing shield, that became the flare which signaled the start of the battle.

## 8. Violet Swamp and Golden Lion

Even if he was tired and had lost one of his remaining lives, Yudia Batsand was an ascended being. He was capable of cornering the Golden Lion's party.

But that was it.

"How detestable."

After he was covered in wounds and had lost his last remaining life, Yudia Batsand spoke.

The Golden Lion Earl stepped on his chest and leaned down.

"I have been enjoying your ex-lover every night."

She had to start off with those words first. As a sadist, there was a procedure which she had to adhere to.

"I am well aware that you are a professional bullshitter who goes around doing idiotic things however you desire. Nevertheless, there's a limit to shenanigans. For you to dare to lay your hands on this fair lady's toys. You should acknowledge the fact that you have gone too far this time."

"I admit it." Thanks to their bout, Yudia had also calmed down. "What are you going to do to me?"

"Sophna will determine that."

Sophna placed her hand on her chest.

"Is it fine for me to decide?"

"Were you not the one who was harmed the most? What

punishment do you wish to bring down upon him? As I thought, is it castration?”

The Meteor Dagger Prince was the one who shrunk back in response to that instead of Yudia Batsand. Sophna thought for a moment before answering.

“This man is an ascended being. Even if you cut it off, he is capable of regenerating.”

“Even better. You can cut it off as many times as you want.”

Yudia still didn’t shrink back. Instead, he averted his gaze.

“If you wish to cut it, then go ahead. Detestably, I have no place to use it now.”

That attitude annoyed Sophna.

“Why are you acting as if you are the victim? I am the one who was abruptly raped.”

“You have known for a long time that I am this sort of existence.”

“This is why I feel sorry for you! This is also why I broke up with you!”

“Detestably, let’s get one thing straight. I was the one who suggested that we should break up first. Therefore, I am the one who dumped you.”

Sophna opened her mouth.

Yudia adjusted his monocle.

“Furthermore, you weren’t that shocked, were you?”

“Was that the issue in the end?”

“Yes. Even though a lesbian was raped by a man in her own room,

by her ex-lover at that. I apologize if it seems like I am repeating myself, but I thought that that much would be enough to make you hate me eternally.”

“Please get rid of that idiotic way of thinking. Why is my life being messed with when you are the one who had done wrong?”

There was some lamentation in Sophna’s voice. Yudia realized that he was truly unable to harm Sophna by even the slightest amount.

Arabet Orgit grumbled.

“This is a nice amicable conversation and all, but Sophna, when do you intend to cut off this guy’s head?”

Sophna let out a long sigh.

“I don’t intend to.”

Arabet Orgit was a faithful knight. As much as this was the case, she believed that she had a fastidious side to her.

“Sophna Radgrinkle, let’s wrap up everything that has happened. This guy raped you, he paralyzed the Earl’s ‘wife’, Meteor Dagger, he tried to mess up this city’s water source, and the fact that he endangered our lives a countless number of times during our fight is unquestionable. Despite all this, you’re saying that you won’t take this guy’s head? Ah, I’m not trying to say anything here. I’m just saying. Yeah. I’ll probably leave records of this fact and tell my children about it, but what I’m trying to say is, well, yeah.”

And other people believed that Arabet had an annoying side to her. Sophna didn’t hide her annoyance.

“That is for me to decide. Is that not right, Your Excellency? You left it in my hands, right?”

“Can I take back that right to decide and give it to Arabet?”



“Your Lordship…….”

Sophna looked sad. The Golden Lion Earl scratched the back of her head.

“No, it was a joke. There are some procedures I have to follow as a sadist…… In any case, I’m sorry. Tell me what you want to do.”

Sophna gazed down at Yudia with eyes that were sad for many different reasons.

“I’ll overlook this incident. In exchange, you have to follow every order that Her Excellency the Earl gives you from now on.”

“What will you do if I say no?”

“Then as Her Lordship had suggested, after castrating you one hundred times, we’ll do as Arabet had advised and end your life.”

It wasn’t a difficult choice.

While Yudia was going through the process of forming a worldly pact——it just so happened that royalty, the Meteor Dagger Prince, was present so it could be done immediately——the Golden Lion Earl hugged Sophna from behind. Sophna lowered her head while leaning back into the Golden Lion’s embrace.

“Do you think I am soft?”

The Golden Lion Earl licked Sophna’s neck.

“Has that not always been the case, my adorable Radgrinkle?”

Even though she was aware that something was a genuine problem, she caused things which could not be fixed to happen. Similar to how Yudia didn’t change, she would most likely be unable to change as well. At the very least, Sophna won’t be able to make herself change. Sophna made that presumption with a dry smile on her face.

It was in that moment that an unusual change was seen.

## 9. Climax

The water dragon, Stream that flows to a high place, died. After being struck by the Golden Lion's Life Snake Whip, Rartegias, she sank to the bottom of the lake.

There are times when death is unable to exhibit its absoluteness. Even more so when it comes to beings like dragons. The fight that had occurred between an ascended being and a dragon slayer, her two vassals, and the man who was both the dragon slayer's husband and also a member of the Kingdom of the Twelve Earthly Branch's royal family was big enough to sufficiently stimulate the dragon's remains.

Stream's soul boiled.

The first thing that happened was an earthquake. The next occurrence that happened with the underground lake wasn't an increase in water quantity but pressure. The Dragon Force which had stabilized this area was reacting to its owner's soul.

With the lava that had once hardened bursting out as the starting point, the central tower, the Golden Lion Castle, the Dragon Walls which established its foundation, and the entire city enclosed within those walls started the tremble.

"Damn it."

The dragon slayer could be connected to the dragon. The Golden Lion Earl who knew the cause of the disturbance and what was going to happen afterward pressed her hand against her forehead. After giving a simple explanation about the situation, she spoke.

"It can't be helped. I'll have to solve the problem which I had caused."

“What do you mean?”

“You already know the answer. I’m going to go finish the job.” After telling off her husband, the Golden Lion Earl turned to look at Arabet. “Arabet, will you follow me?”

Arabet Orgit definitely had an annoying side to her. However, she knew when to repress that side of herself.

The Golden Lion stroked Arabet’s head as she sternly nodded her head. Although there were some white strands in that hair and some wrinkles on that hand, the two looked as graceful as they did back when they first met. The Golden Lion Earl grinned broadly and turned around.

“All right. It would be good if we had more manpower.”

“This lady shall go as well.”

Sophna spoke with a determined look on her face. It was at that moment, that someone spoke up from behind her.

“I will go as well.”

Sophna looked back to face Yudia. Yudia Batsand continued.

“Taking down a dragon’s soul will be interesting, after all.”

“You really.”

“You know that I am this sort of person,”

“I already know. Your Lordship, please accept our lives.”

Sophna gazed at her lord with a look full of resolve. Behind her, Violet Swamp was gripping his spear tightly.

However, the Golden Lion Earl was a sadist.

“I refuse.”

And also a ruler.

“For starters, maniac, you’re made of poison. We’re going to jump into the central water source right now, so imagine the citizens drinking the water that you’ve bathed in. It would probably be a miracle for the people who want to kill themselves, but this would be like if someone with ten fingers had sat on the throne for the majority of the people.”

Yudia had no other choice but to stand down. The Golden Lion Earl turned to face Sophna next.

“And you had sex with that maniac. They say that sperm is normally stored inside the womb for over a week.”

“That was by force! If that’s going to be a problem, then I’ll leave my womb behind!”

“Don’t.”

“But why!? Do you think that this man will hold me back!? Furthermore, I do not intend to have a child any……!”

“Take care of my children.”

The Golden Lion Earl spoke.

Sophna opened her mouth. She then closed it. She repeated this action several times before she began to tear up.

“I,” Sophna uttered. “I love you, Your Lordship, not your children. If anything,”

If anything, Sophna continued.

“If anything, I hate your children. Your and that male prostitute’s children, I.”

“Protect them.”

The hand of the one whom Sophna had affection for touched her freckled cheek.

“Even if you do not like them that much, are they not proof that this fair lady existed? If you believe this as well, then remember me through them. Oh, my adorable Radgrinkle, who could I leave this task to other than you?”

Sophna covered her mouth with her hand. Her lips were dry.

“But, I.”

“You may dislike this idea now, but would that be the case later? Was the conclusion not already established when we took care of this guy? You are not a heartless person, and you are well aware of this fact.”

“Uu…….”

Tears started to flow down from Sophna’s eyes.

While displaying the same confident smile which made Sophna fall for her in the first place, the Golden Lion Earl spoke.

“I ask this of you.”

“Okay.”

Before she could nod her head, Sophna Radgrinkle answered.

“Okay, I will. Until the day Your Lordship’s……your bloodline ends. Until the day this city has a new bloodline as its ruler. I shall protect your bloodline. I shall protect your land.”

Sophna put more strength into her voice.

“I will protect them for your sake.”

The Golden Lion Earl smiled. Her white canines shined brightly.

“Maniac.”

“Yes?”

Yudia answered.

“I wanted to shove you around more, but things have ended up like this. You’re fortunate. I don’t have anything much to say, but don’t show your face in this land for the next hundred years. Understood?”

“All right.”

“Good. Now back to gathering the remaining manpower.”

The Golden Lion Earl turned to look at the prince.

“It’s just you.”

The prince made a futile resistance.

“I was also paralyzed.”

“Did you have sex as well?”

The Meteor Dagger Prince let out a groan. Yudia spoke towards the prince who was glaring at him.

“Do you want to take this opportunity to do it now?”

“It’s fine! I’m,”

The Meteor Dagger Prince cleared his throat.

“There was something that I wanted to do. Even now, there are things……I have aspirations.”

The prince gazed at his ‘husband’ with pleading eyes.

“Golden Lion. Please. Can you not be the only one to die? Then I will manage the city in your stead and…….”

In that spot, the Golden Lion Earl stopped the prince's solicitation with a kiss.

It was a long kiss.

“Let us go together.”

The Meteor Dagger Prince dropped his head. The Golden Lion Earl patted that head.

“Damn it.”

In the end, the Meteor Dagger Prince spoke.

“Damn it, this marriage, is ruinous. It's seriously a ruined marriage.”

“I'm satisfied. We were a good match in bed, were we not?”

“What are you saying in a situation like this!?”

“Is it not because we're in a situation like this that I'm able to say this?”

“You really! This is why ten fingers are! Bite off all twelve fingers!”

“Was that not the case?”

The Meteor Dagger Prince closed his eyes and opened them.

“Let's do it one more time before we go.”

“Oho, that is an attractive offer. There are two problems. First is the fact that this fair lady is currently on her period, and the second issue is the fact that we have wasted far too much time now. If we were to waste 5 more minutes like this, then…….”

“It doesn't matter! ……And it'll be over before that. You know that already.”



Of course she knew.

It most likely wouldn't take even 3 minutes. Arabet Orgit grumbled as she took the lead and the Golden Lion Earl followed behind her. The Meteor Dagger Prince followed after them while holding onto the earl's sleeve with all six of his fingers.

Sophna and Yudia watched them depart.

## 10. And then

Terrifying noises resonated for a long period of time. Each time it happened, the cave itself shook. After a piercing sound and tremor that felt as if a ginormous monster were rubbing two mountains together ended, everything stopped.

Yudia and Sophna stood there as they listened to everything.

There were no more noises now.

Despite that, the two of them continued to wait for a while longer. There was still no sound.

Another long period of time went by. Eventually, they heard the sound of footsteps. It came from behind them. It was the sound of the other Pillars returning with the guards after having felt a sense of crisis from the earthquakes and floods originating from the water source.

However, the silence from the lake continued.

Yudia Batsand, who believed that they had waited long enough, opened his mouth.

“Sophna.”

“Yes?”

“Detestably, I believe that you have just become single now, so if you want,”

“No.”

“Okay.”

There was another silence.

Sophna, who was leaning on her staff, slowly closed her eyes. After standing like that for a long time…… she collapsed.

It was like an old tree had fallen over.

It was also as if she had just sprouted.

Like that, the Yellow-Green Grass mage sobbed for a long time.



I always fall into deep thought whenever I write the afterwords. I feel like I spend the majority of my time debating whether I should write it or not. Write and erase, write and erase, write and erase. What remains afterward ends up becoming the afterword.

It's not too different to the process of writing.

Do you know about the western RPG curse?

It's a curse where you finish all of the beginner quests and say things like 'Ah, my character sucks' and 'I shouldn't have done that during that quest' and restart from the beginning. This is why I couldn't see the endings of Oblivion, Skyrim, and Divinity: Original Sin. I end up playing the beginner quests so many times that I would lose interest in the game and toss the game aside.

What must be done in order to get rid of this curse? Even if I feel like I've messed up the character creation and quests, I feel like just rushing forward until I reach the ending, at the very least, clearing the main questline is the only method. I'll still be able to play the game again with a fresh feeling after going through the ending once.

This is also not very different to the process of writing.

On the other hand, whenever I use Twitter, I tweet things without thinking. Even if I reach the limit, I tweet within the limit. Even when I buy games, I do so without thinking whatsoever. Even if I have PSN and Steam games that I haven't cleared yet, I'll still buy games.

This is very different to the process of writing.

You can't have everything. But you still want them. Everything. I think like this every day.

There was a new character introduced at the end of this volume, but more detailed pieces of information like from the character sheet will be introduced in the next volume. A child who's as cheerful as Roroa, this is the child that I had written about in the afterword of volume 3, the girl who goes around in the middle of the summer wearing stockings while also fully clothed.

In any case, please look forward to the next volume!

Have a nice day!